

THOUGHTS OF A MYSTIC

by Swami Abhayananda

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The Supreme Self
History of Mysticism: The Unchanging Testament
The Wisdom of Vedanta
Jnaneshvar: The Life And Works
Dattatreya: Song of The Avadhut
Thomas á Kempis: On The Love of God
Plotinus: The Origin of Western Mysticism
Mysticism And Science: A Call for Reconciliation
The Divine Universe
Reflections On The Soul
Body And Soul
Mystical Theology

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Swami Abhayananda may be contacted by email at:
abhayananda@bellsouth.net, and may be found on the web at:
www.themysticsvision.com.

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Preface

In April of 2013, I began posting some brief mystical observations taken from various books and other writings of my own to a website which I called “The Mystic’s Vision.” Within a few years, I had accumulated a quantity of these observations that filled two ebook volumes of *The Mystic’s Vision*, which were then offered as free downloadable ebooks on my website (www.themysticsvision.com). In 2018, I combined some of those brief observations which pertained to a common topic, and formed thereby twenty-five larger, more comprehensive, topical Articles, which I then offered on my website in two downloadable volumes as *The Essential Articles of Swami Abhayananda*.

I have learned over this period, however, that many people have difficulty reading spiritual texts that consist of more than one or two pages. And so, in June of 2019, I began a new column on my website called “Thought For This Week” in which I posted each week a single brief Thought on a particular subject in a one or two page format. Later, I put all these Thoughts together in this single downloadable ebook, and called it *Thoughts of A Mystic*, for the benefit of those who would like to enjoy the whole series of mystical/metaphysical readings in a single collection. I believe that each of these brief “Thoughts” is valuable in itself as an inspirational reminder, and I believe that many will enjoy the entire Collection as a treasured resource for the truths that each of these Thoughts conveys. May this book, *Thoughts of A Mystic*, inspire and uplift you, and may the Lord grant to you the clear knowledge of your own Divine Self.

—Swami Abhayananda
September 15, 2019

1. My Awakening (from *The Supreme Self*, 1984)

In June of 1966, I was fascinated with the symbology of myths, and was reading Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell, both of whom were speaking repeatedly about “Vedanta,” the mysterious philosophy of India. And so, when I saw in a local bookstore a copy of a book called *Vedanta For The Western World*, I bought a copy. This book, edited by Christopher Isherwood, consisted of a series of articles by such figures as Swami Prabhavananda and Aldous Huxley, and spelled out in very easy-to-understand terms the philosophy of Vedanta.

Vedanta, I soon learned, refers to the philosophy expressed in the *Upanishads*, considered to be the final appendages to the Vedas. It is a nondualistic philosophy; that is to say, a monistic one. It admits to an *apparent* duality between God and the world, between Consciousness and matter, but this duality, says Vedanta, is apparent only. In the “mystical vision” they are experienced as one.

According to Vedanta, when a person becomes enlightened—in other words, when he realizes the ultimate Truth, or God, in mystical vision—he experiences an absolute Unity, wherein everything is seen to be a manifestation of one universal Self. He knows for certain: “I and the Father are one.” This is not a mere aberration of consciousness, nor an illusory “union” of the soul and God; it is a glimpse into the nature of the underlying Reality of one’s existence. It is the revelation of one’s true and eternal Self. This, says Vedanta, is the perennial teaching of all the sages and saints of all times. For the experience of Unity, whether called *samadhi*, *satori*, or “union with God,” is the same for all, and is the basis for all the various religions.

Reading of this, I suddenly understood what the religious mystics had been talking about. The teachings of Jesus, the Buddha, and all the saints of all religions were seen to be based upon this same experiential knowledge. Everything I had ever puzzled over became clear; everything fell into place. I had scarcely finished with the Introduction to this book, and I knew that I had acquired a new and profound vision, which brought everything together for me and answered all my questions forever. I knew my life would never be the same. I knew I had found the key to an extraordinary wealth of understanding about myself and the nature of reality.

It was as though a veil that I had previously been unaware of had suddenly been drawn away, revealing a world I had heretofore been looking at as through a hazy fog. It was not so much an intellectual revelation as a spiritual one, for suddenly I saw everything bathed in light, and from deep within me there welled up a happiness, a clear, bright joyfulness, that testified to its truth, its rightness, more convincingly than any reason or merely intellectual conviction could do.

As I continued reading this amazing book, I was introduced to the 19th century mystic, Sri Ramakrishna, who was mad with fervor for “the vision of God” from an early age, and who became so one-pointed in mind through devotional love that he became entirely lost to the world of forms, aware only of the all-pervasive Reality. Reading of the life of Sri Ramakrishna and other such saints, I felt I had entered into an elite society of delirious madmen, madmen who called themselves, “the lovers Of God,” who, turning away from the normal transitory pursuits of man, sought to become intimate with the very fountainhead of the universe. Somehow, I had never understood before that such a thing was really possible.

Reading the inspiring words of Sri Ramakrishna, who had clearly known the unitive Reality, I experienced a wave of such happiness that I could scarcely bear it. Sitting on my porch, becoming aware of these things for the first time, I experienced a shower of golden light pouring down upon me, as though raining on the back of my neck, and awaking a deep and delicious chill in my body that ran up my spine and caused my scalp to tingle.

For the first time, I understood what drew men to religion. I had previously attributed it to weakness of mind. How much grander was the heritage of man than I had supposed. I had viewed all this talk of “God” through the ages as the superstitious babbling of fools. But I had been the fool. There *was* a God—but it was not what I had supposed men meant by the term. “God” meant not some ethereal being with a white beard, etc.; God was Being itself—the eternal substratum of Existence. And the proof of it was that God could be experienced, actually realized, seen with the inner eye of unleashed awareness. For the first time, I could fathom it; I understood the method in the madness of the saints. My mind was dazzled, ecstatic.

I was really extraordinarily happy. Of course, all my friends thought I had suddenly gone mad. Their faces betrayed their uneasiness when I began

talking about God and the mystics who had known Him. I began to realize that I had touched on something that not everyone could, or was willing to, understand. I read about “Grace,” the amazing descent of Grace; and it seemed to me that just such a thing was happening to me. By some process of awakening, to which I was an unwitting spectator, I was seeing with an entirely new and different pair of eyes. My old friends were unable to understand or to share in any way the intensity of my fervor, my excitement; and I realized that I would have to go on this journey alone.

* * *

2. Mystical Experience (from *The Supreme Self*, 1984)

Though the conventional modern reader may be unfamiliar with the mystical experience and its implications, there is a long history of mystical convention that can be found at the core of nearly every religious tradition. And though my experience and my views may seem radically at odds with modern convention, I believe that they fall very comfortably within the esoteric, but historically universal, mystical convention.

Mystical experience, that reveals the nature of the Self and the universe, does not occur to everyone, it seems; and so, it is an unfamiliar subject to many. And, while such experience can be described, it cannot be adequately conveyed except to those who are intuitively receptive to the notion of the divinity of the soul. For the unitive mystical experience is the direct revelation of that divinity. It is an inner revelation of Grace that puts the soul in direct contact with the transcendent Reality. The advanced student of philosophy will recognize the existence of such experience from the writings of Plotinus, Meister Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, and many other “mystics.” However, for the many who have not studied the writings of the famous mystics throughout history, such an experience may be a completely foreign concept.¹

In the ancient religious traditions of India, and especially in the Upanishads, such an experience is widely recognized. It is described as “the realization of the *Paramatman*, or Supreme Self.” The divine Reality is not referred to as “God”, or “Brahman”, but as “the Supreme Self”, because, in the mystical experience, one experiences the Divinity as one’s Self. There is a uniting of

the soul and God, so that soul no longer sees as soul, but sees as the eternal God, and knows that Divine to be the true Self it has always been. It knows its own deathless reality beyond the illusory personality it had previously identified with. And ever thereafter it bears with it the unassailable certainty of its eternal and unlimited Identity.

NOTE:

1. Please see my *History of Mysticism* available at my website.

* * *

3. Mystical Experience And Popular Culture (10-2-19)

Mystical experience is the bedrock source of all religion. It is the source of the Upanishads; it is the source of Buddhism; it is the source of the teachings of Abraham and Moses; it is the source of the teachings of Jesus; and it is the source of the teachings of Muhammed in the Quran. Why is it then that there is so little public acknowledgement of the existence of mystical experience and its importance in the lives of the great representatives of human spirituality? Mystical experience has occurred throughout our history to a few extraordinary individuals, who having told of their divine revelations, have deeply affected the course of human religious tradition and the history of human development; and yet our popular societal culture is quite oblivious to the occurrence of mystical experience.

The “news media” may be relied upon to feature daily the latest rap star or movie queen, but when was the last time you heard or saw in the News any mention of mystical experience and its profound implications for an increase in understanding of our true nature and the true nature of our world? Is it possible that we are just in a cultural slump these days? No. It is *not* just the commentators of today; it has always been thus. Reporters of the secular culture have always been deaf and blind to accounts of anything beyond their sensory experience. It is only the mystics themselves who speak of mystical experience; the subject remains utterly closed to the ignorant majority of people in our popular societal culture. Frustrating as it is, the layered inequality of spiritual understanding among people seems to be an *intended* feature of the Creator’s universal scheme of things, and therefore the mystic’s vision will continue to remain an inconceivable mystery to all

but those blessed few who are privileged to experience it. Only those who are known as “mystics” are able to speak authoritatively about mystical experience, its source, and its content. To all others, it is an unfathomable mystery whose existence is subject to belief or disbelief in accordance with each individual’s personal inclination.

On the positive side, however, the academic community is very much engaged recently in discussing ‘mystical experience’. We have seen a recent rash of learned academic articles regarding the validity or non-validity of mystical experience by academic professors whose only familiarity with such experience is from what they have read in books. But, however beneficial this may be to the general awareness of mystical experience in our society, I would like to point out to these earnest scholars that one of the distinguishing hallmarks of mystical experience is that such an experience, being a divine revelation, occurs beyond the level of normal human consciousness, and is therefore quite beyond any kind of normal psychological evaluation or explication. For that reason, if an admittedly ineffable mystical experience is to be spoken of, it may be done effectively only by one who has actually experienced it. It is only fitting that what we learn of mystical experience we learn from those who claim to have experienced it. Those who are tempted to offer their learned opinion on mystical vision, without any direct experience of it, must be kindly advised to remain silent.

In one’s normal, everyday state of consciousness, it is possible to conceive some ideas about the nature of God and His creation, but it is not possible to actually *see* the spiritual nature of things; for that, you must enter into the divine consciousness. You must be drawn by the grace of God into an altered state of rapturous awareness, in which the divine glory is made visible and where all is clearly realized to live in the kingdom of God. I would not call it a trance, but it is definitely other than one’s ordinary state of consciousness; it is more concentrated, more focused, more awake, and only in that extraordinary realm of awareness will you be able to see your true nature as divine, as all-pervading. Unfortunately, however, there are no roads leading to this clarified state of consciousness and no directions for how to find it; it is a place to which only God can take you.

When I was a young man, Almighty God, who fills the universe and commands the elements, who is the Lord and Ruler of all that is, placed in my heart a prayer; and then He fulfilled that prayer by making me one with

Himself, filling me with divine knowledge and grace. Is this not a moment to celebrate as one of the very greatest moments in all of human history? To me, of course it is. And, when the Lord casts His gaze upon you and enlightens *your* heart with His divine favor, the greatest moment in human history will occur for *you*. Until then, continue to seek Him with all your heart and soul.

* * *

4. The Greatest Secret (last revised 7-7-19)

Only the Divine Mind is eternally real. The universe, made of His form-producing Energy, appears to be real, but it is only a transient mirage, a colorful illusion. And yet this illusory universe is filled with and enlivened by His Consciousness. He is its Soul, its animating power, and is thereby the life and soul of every being in it. All the forms appearing in this universe are made of His Divine Energy, but, alas, the briefly appearing forms in this phenomenal universe quickly change and vanish; in fact, the entire universe is only an illusory appearance, a fleeting mirage; while *He*, and the Energy He contains, lives forever, undivided, unchanged. He alone, the one eternal Mind, is eternally real. And *that* is who you must one day realize you are. For that eternal One is the origin and substance of your being, the soul of your soul, and your only lasting Identity. It is the one divine Self you have always been and will always be.

* * *

5. Born of His Light (last revised 7-7-19)

Don't you know that we are born of His light—
That every elementary particle of matter began as a photon of light?
Every electron, every quark in the interior of every proton
Or neutron came into being and acquired its properties
In the transformation of those high-energy photons of light
Streaming out from the Creator's breath.

This world and all worlds sparkling throughout the cosmos
 Are made of the radiance of God's power,
 A dancing array of His light's many ephemeral forms.
 And we, evolved from His light, are endowed with
 The presence of His eternal Self, and live by His life,
 And love with His love and know with His wisdom.
 We are conscious by His marvelous all-pervading awareness;
 We see by His loving grace,
 And we sing His praise by His gift of song.

Then sing, ye God-born angels of light!
 Raise up your voices to Him whose fabric forms your being and appearance,
 Whose life-pulse fires your heart and breath.
 Remember Him whose goodness molded you, whose love enfolds you,
 Whose existence is the life-stream of your being,
 And whose out-flowing Bliss provides the everlasting joy of your soul.
 Until we wend our way back into His eternal light, sing forth His praise.

* * *

6. Blessedness

It is evident to everyone that God is adept at concealing Himself; but few people know that He also reveals Himself—and yet He does! He reveals Himself in those who love Him and whose hearts are pure. Since He is in all creatures, He is easily able to reveal His inner presence in those whom He finds worthy. Those to whom He reveals Himself awaken to the knowledge that they and all things are made of God, that He alone constitutes the being of all things in the universe.

Prior to that awakening, these people had no idea that they were God's manifestations. They thought they were individual beings alone in the universe. They didn't understand that one omnipotent Power fills all creatures and all things; that He alone exists in every form. If He has not yet revealed Himself in you, pray to Him for His merciful Grace. Let Him know your loneliness without Him. For truly, without the knowledge of His eternal presence, you are lost, even if you know it not. To know Him as your essence, to know Him as your very identity and breath, will so fill your heart

with joy and wisdom that you will think of Him every moment and see Him in every thing and in every event on earth. You will sing His praise in your heart and delight in the divine beauty all around you in His world. This blessing is the true Kingdom of God in which the blessed live forevermore. May He grant this blessing to you.

* * *

7. There Is A Knowledge Beyond Knowledge

There is a Knowledge beyond knowledge, won only by the brave, who soar on wings of love, beyond the knowing mind. The penetrating laser-light of intellect is able to comprehend the spoken truth—but it cannot know the source of its own light. It can form myriads of concepts about the knower, but it cannot turn its light on itself and thereby *know* the knower.

To know that knowing Self, we must set out blindly, without words, without images; even that shining intellect which is our pride and joy must be left behind. With no borrowed or reflected light, with no idea-projecting faculty to cast images on the cave-wall of the conscious mind, we must enter naked, empty-handed, and alone into that dark light.

Without intellect, without a preconceived identity or even existence; unknowing, unseeing, guided only by a faith in Truth and the longing of a pure heart, we may enter into the silence of that all-knowing Light. There, no questions rise to separate the knower from the known. There, the Knower is alone—with a Knowledge beyond knowledge, won only by the brave, who soar on wings of love, beyond the knowing mind.

* * *

8. The Religion of Love (last revised 7-21-19)

The great Sufi mystic and poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, said: “The religion of love is distinct from all others; the lovers of God have a religion and a faith all their own.”

What is this religion of love? It has no name. Neither does it have any nationality. It is beginningless, and without end. It originates in the heart and can only be mimicked in speech. It is the cry of the heart for God’s mercy and grace. Yet, even this heartfelt pain is His grace; for this yearning is but the drawing of His comfort and solace.

Love calls, and Love responds. In both instances, that Love is accompanied by tears. Yet, even this calling, though painful, is sweet; for it is *His* Love that burns in the heart. And when He responds, the heart’s cup is filled with much more than it can hold. No eyes have seen this filling; no words have ever told of its taste. Yet, in countless hearts, throughout the universe, this religion lives, and supplies the world with Love.

* * *

9. Thou Art Love (last revised 7-21-19)

Thou art Love, and I shall follow all Thy ways.
 I shall have no care, for Love cares only to love.
 I shall have no fear, for Love is fearless;
 Nor shall I frighten any,
 For Love comes sweetly and meek.
 I shall keep no violence within me,
 Neither in thought nor in deed,
 For Love comes peacefully.
 I shall bear no shield or sword,
 For the defense of Love is love.
 I shall seek Thee in the eyes of men,
 For love seeks Thee always.
 I shall keep silence before Thine enemies,
 And lift to them Thy countenance,

For all are powerless before Thee.
 I shall keep Thee in my heart with precious care,
 Lest Thy light be extinguished by the winds;
 For without Thy light, I am in darkness.
 I shall go free in the world with Thee —
 Free of all bondage to anything but Thee;
 For Thou art my God, the sole Father of my being,
 The sweet breath of Love that lives in my heart;
 And I shall follow Thee, and live with Thee,
 And lean on Thee till the end of my days.

* * *

10. The Unchanging Testament **(last revised 7-28-19)**

There is a summit of knowledge which has been reached by a few lone souls such as the Buddha, Jesus, Shankara, Ibn Arabi, Ramakrishna, and others. This knowledge came to each of them by the grace of God, revealing the truth that all existence is contained in and consists of the one eternal Self. This being so, there are no separate beings such as the Buddha, Jesus, Shankara, etc., but only the One, knowing Himself in all these various forms. Indeed, it is just this knowledge which constitutes the message of every seer of Truth: 'The One exists as you and me. Realize this truth; know that you are that One and be free of the pain of enmity.'

There is but one religion, not many. It is only the childish and the deluded who think otherwise. There is but one substance which is variously named as *water, pani, jal, agua*; but no matter what it is called, that same substance quenches the thirst of all. There is but one Life, though it takes various forms, such as the tiger, the serpent, or man; all breathe one air, all see one light. Understand too that one all-pervading Intelligence fills all minds, gives conscious Light to all that lives. He alone is, and He lives and breathes as us.

In knowing Him, all purposes of life are fulfilled. In shedding darkness from our minds, by rising high above the clouds of 'me' and 'mine', we come closer to this Light, and merge our awareness in Him. This is the tale which all have told who've seen the Truth. It is neither old nor new, but it is

an unchanging testament that neither time nor place on earth affects. Jesus, Buddha, Ramakrishna—all have reached that same summit, and shown to us the way. Now, we must climb alone and find our way into the Truth which they enjoy and make it finally our own.

* * *

11. The Divine Self **(last revised 7-28-19)**

We do not see the transcendent God, and yet we see His handiwork. It is only natural, therefore, that we think of God as being somewhere else, far above us, as a king is above his subjects. Since ancient times, when primitive men roamed the earth, God has been regarded as a transcendent overlord, separate from this world and its creatures, who dwells in some distant yet ever-present heavenly realm. But what marvelous news! When He finally lifts the veil and reveals Himself to His devotee, God is seen to be all-pervasive! He is seen to be the very fabric of one's being, the sole Identity of everyone. It is this knowledge that illumined Jesus, prompting him to declare 'I and the Father are one!' This illumination was not the result of the unique paternity of Jesus, nor was it some wild fantasy by which Jesus was deluded; it was the realization of the hidden truth by which Jesus became enlightened by the Grace of God!

To a devoted person who calls out lovingly to His God, it is not immediately apparent that he himself is a manifestation of God; but when God reveals Himself within, that person knows his own deathless Self, his own oneness with God, and knows that nothing else exists in this world but that One. God has spread Himself out as this vast universe, and He is immediately present as our own selves, accessible through our own conscious minds. God is the life that lives you; He flows through that life in every breath. He is the joy that thrills your soul, and He is the sweet awareness of being that fills you. Remember Him and praise Him in every thought and word and know every moment that He is manifest as you, that He is truly your own divine Self.

* * *

12. Of One Many (last revised 8-4-19)

The Latin phrase, *E Pluribus Unum*, is the motto of our country. It means, “Of many, one.” But it would be closer to the truth to say, “Of One, many.” This simple formula explains everything we need to know about the Reality in which we live. For, just as the one white light is refracted to appear as the entire spectrum of colors in a rainbow, so does the one undivided Existence appear as a multitude of forms. Just as a sunflower spreads itself out in its many tender petals, so God spreads Himself out into this variously formed creation. Just as the ocean raises up from itself a tossing surface of countless waves, so the ocean of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss raises up from Itself countless individual forms of life from shore to shore.

In every single form the One alone exists; it is He alone who lives in every life. However wise, however foolish, however attractive, however repulsive—the tiger and the scorpion, the spider and the snake—all is His Life, playing in a million fantastic forms. And we, children of His mind, images projected from His light upon Himself, wander here and there upon His screen, playing out our roles, forgetful of the One in whose dance of Light we live. But when we turn within, behold! We discover as our very essence that One who lives as many, the heart and soul of all that lives, the blissful God whose life and breath we are.

* * *

13. Look Around You (last revised 8-4-19)

Without any doubts, this world, this vast universe, is made *by* God, *of* God, and resides *in* God. For there is no other Reality but Him. God is the one all-inclusive Spirit, or Mind, in whom everything and everyone has its being. This truth has been clearly revealed through Grace to countless individual souls in an enlightening inner vision. If there was something else—something other than Him, it is in that divine inner vision that we would learn of it. But it is there, in that divine revelation, that we learn that we are made of God-stuff, that there is nothing else! We learn that it is the one Great Mind who brings all to light, and that it is He in whom everything resides and of whom everything consists. There, by His Grace, we learn our

oneness with Him. There, two-ness cannot even arise as an imagination. You will be happy to know that, by searching for Him within, you too can experience His Grace. You too can know Him as the one and only Reality and solve this great riddle of Nonduality conclusively for yourself.

Look around you! Do you not see that every blade of grass is bursting with Consciousness? Do you not see that every chunk of gravel is alive with Consciousness? Do you not see how perfectly timed the planets move, how the Sun and moon tell the unveiling of the moments in your life?

O what good fortune is this—to see with the eyes of the Divine, to bathe in the bliss of His living presence, to delight in the heavenly breezes wafting in the summer light! Look around you!

* * *

14. This Is The Truth (last revised 8-11-19)

This is the truth: Nowhere is there anything other than God.
 This world is a drama performed by one actor in a multitude of roles.
 We, His distinctly variant roles, are nothing but Him!
 What can we do but dance to His tune?
 He has made Himself into all these worlds and all these beings,
 And we are but His manifold forms.
 Though we appear to be independent entities,
 Our characteristics and our inclinations are all programmed by Him,
 And enacted by Him.
 Everything being done is being done by God!

Whatever is to be done in the future will also be done by Him;
 And so, glory be to God—in the highest and in the lowest!
 Glory be to the One who lives as you and who lives as me!
 Waves on His ocean, we think we're distinctly our own,
 Unaware that we're forever inseparable from Him.
 Calling Himself "I", He lives us, He breathes us.
 Only in the depths of His Grace are we able to know Him.

* * *

15. The Only One (last revised 8-11-19)

The false ‘I’—the individual person we think we are—doesn’t really exist! It’s merely a mental phenomenon, an imaginary being. The true ‘I’—the only one who really exists—is the all-pervading Spirit. That is your only true identity. You are That. I am That. We imagine that we have a separate and distinct identity, but it is the one Spirit alone who is living as you and as me. So—can you grasp it? When the sage asks you to inquire “Who am I?” he’s asking you to become aware of the divine Reality who is the true and everlasting identity of everyone.¹

Though you are unable at this time to know your Self as all-pervading, the truth is that you are in the clouds, and you are in the gritty soil. You are the pulse of the turtle; you are the clanging bells of joy that thrill the hearts of all who know joy. It is you that stirs in the heart as a rising song; it is your love that flows throughout the world. Here, there, everywhere, it is you alone who exists.

Whether you objectify that all-pervading Divinity as other—as ‘He’—or know that divine Self as ‘I’ within, the divine Reality is all there is in this world and beyond. ‘He’ and ‘I’ are the same. What Jesus proclaimed is true for all of us: ‘I’ and ‘the Father’ are one. Say it in your heart, and know it is true. Whatever name stirs you to remembrance of the one divine Spirit—sing that name in your heart and let the blissful awareness of His endless presence continually fill your soul.

NOTE:

1. It’s true that we come into this world individualized as separate and distinct souls. But all souls are composed of the one underlying Divinity, the all-pervading Spirit. And, in the unitive experience of the mystic, the veil of separateness is lifted, the distinct individuality of the soul is transcended, and the soul awakens to the clear awareness that its true and everlasting identity is the one all-pervading Divine Reality.

16. The Real (5-2-2016)

When I awakened to the One,
 All the opposites had vanished.
 No I, no Thou, no now, or then.
 Sound, silence, living, dead—
 None of these remained;
 Only a sweet Awareness
 Filled the wondrous undivided space.

That eternal Awareness alone is real;
 Individual life is but a temporary illusion
 That comes and goes, inventing time.
 Inconceivably, unimaginably,
 The Real alone abides:
 No opposites within It.

The one eternal Awareness is absolute;
 All the pairs of opposites
 Exist only in your mind.
 They are dependent upon the existence
 Of your individual perspective.

We each comprise an individual perspective
 That we call our ego.
 All of the opposites—you, me; up, down; left, right;
 East, west; hot, cold; true, false; etc.—exist only
 Because of that individual perspective.
 Even past and future, as well as the now,
 Is relative to our individual perspective;
 But none of those contraries even exist in the Real.

That eternal Awareness alone is real;
 Individual life is but a temporary illusion
 That comes and goes, inventing time.

* * *

17. The Two In One

Look, the eternal Source is one alone;
 But It has imaged forth within Itself a cosmic array
 Containing beings such as you and me.
 Eternally the one great Mind exists alone;
 Its transient changing picture-show comes and goes,
 An image on the screen of time.

But, even as the stars play out their birth and death,
 The eternal One is undiminished, undivided, undismayed.
 For, since the universal drama exists within the one great Mind,
 There is no separation, no duality at all.
 And yet, while we live and dance in time and space,
 We inhabit an imaginary dream of non-eternity,
 Of transient bodies and volitional activities,
 A secondary world, unreal.
 For “real”, by definition, refers only to the Permanent,
 The Eternal, the Mind unmanifest and clear.
 So, what is this compelling show, this conjured art,
 This fleeting Mind-dreamt castle-in-the-air
 In which we’re sentenced to abide?
 It’s smoke and mirrors, a magic show,
 A dream enactment in which we demonstrate
 The merits of our individual souls,
 And eventually come to know exactly who we are.
 For the fact is you’ve never left your eternal realm;
 You delight there even now.

The timeless Self you’ve always been
 Was never imprisoned in a bodily shell;
 That’s but an illusion, a convincing spell that binds you
 To the dream of separate personality.
 Yet, one by one, we learn the truth of who we are,
 And once you’re freed of duality’s deception,
 You’ll realize you never left eternity’s bliss.
 You’re one unparcelled Self— unbound forever,
 Complete in the unity of the boundless One,
 An eternal “I” that stands forever free,
 Perfect and triumphant beyond imagined time.

* * *

18. The Divine Source (from *Mystical Theology*, 2012; revised 8-29-2019)

Today, it is common knowledge that all wave-particles of matter were born from the high-frequency Electromagnetic energy released in the ‘Big Bang’ event of fourteen billion years ago; and that it was those wave-particles that evolved into the stars, our world, and all that we know as matter and energy. However, an important question arises: ‘Did the qualities of *life* and *consciousness* exist intrinsically in the light-energy and in the wave-particles that arose from it [as many scientists believe], or was there some kind of *suffusion* of divine consciousness into that primordial matter that served to purposely organize and arrange those wave-particles toward the presently evolved state of life and consciousness that we know and experience today?’ And what should we call such a principle? Anaxagorus called it “Thought”; Heraclitus, and later Philo, called it “Logos”; the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* called it “Sophia”, or “Wisdom”; Plato and Plotinus called it “Psyche”, or “Soul”.

No matter what word we use to denote this principle, it is necessarily a divine, consciously governing and organizing Spirit akin to the “Thought” or “Will” of God, acting in and through all the sensible universe. There are no other alternatives: for either that initial Light itself was and is purposeful, living and conscious, or that purposeful living consciousness acts within and through that light but is distinct from it. And since both light-energy and matter in its pre-organic state seem to be inert and not alive, we must assume that they are also not conscious, nor do they intrinsically contain the seed of consciousness. It would seem, therefore, that we are forced by the evidence to conclude that an invisible living consciousness operates *within* and throughout the material universe, guiding its operations, advancing its evolution, and bringing Its own life and consciousness to light in the living creatures appearing on at least this one planetary body orbiting the star we call the Sun.

That the universe began in a sudden burst of light is unquestioned; but that light did not burst forth from the explosion of a material body, a so-called “singularity” into which all the matter of the universe had been compressed. Rather, that initial abundance of light burst forth from another kind of ‘singularity:’ the energy potential of the eternal Mind, who is both the universe’s Creator and the universal Soul pervading it. Who else could produce an Energy that transforms itself into substantial forms as material

particles along with the purposeful forces required to establish such a universe? Who else could pervade that universe as Mind, and animate each fully evolved form with a living consciousness? Who else could fill the universe with His own Consciousness, imbuing living beings with distinct identities and an individualized self-awareness?

Clearly, that eternal Mind that we call ‘God’ is the source and power of all that is. He has produced all these bodies and their evolutionary developments from His all-powerful light; and He is the inner Soul that permeates all matter and which we identify within ourselves as ‘I’. Indeed, all is He, and all glory is His. What else might we imagine exists? Who else might we imagine ourselves to be?

All the material universe and all the forces operating within it are evolved from His outspreading light, breathed forth nearly fifteen billion years ago. Yet this immense burst of light-energy would have remained but a teeming chaotic mass, random and lifeless, without His conscious direction, without His indwelling Spirit. His manifestation of a material universe is plainly evident to us; but His guiding Spirit is subtle and hidden from our view. We may infer the existence of that subtle Spirit by observing Its effects in the universe and in ourselves; but It is known directly and with certainty only when He reveals Himself within us as our own divine Self and the eternal Self of all.

* * *

19. Where Did Life Come From? **(9-15-2016; revised 8-20-19)**

Where did life come from, and when did it begin? The simplest and most evident answer is that life comes from God.¹ This vast universe was created by God and exists in God. And when I experienced identity with God, through His gracious revelation, I experienced myself as existing blissfully in everything as both universal Consciousness and universal substance. From that experience, I know clearly that it is that one Existence-Consciousness-Bliss that manifests as all things living. It is the origin and manifestation of Life itself. And yet no one—certainly not any of us human mortals—understands how and when the process of life on earth began. There are biological scientists who think they know how life evolved from

simple to more complex forms, from a simple self-replicating cell to various fully formed animals, including us humans; but these scientists readily admit they don't have any idea where that original simple self-replicating cell came from.

Nor do I. But by the knowledge which God revealed in me, I know that life originates in Him, that He is the ultimate principle of life. I know that He is omnipresent and omnipotent; that He has fashioned this universe of His own substance, and that He is the conscious governor of every movement that takes place within it. I know that every form on earth is His own and lives and moves in accord with His greater will. I know that this universe—its manifestation and its evolution—is one coordinated whole and He is its director. I know that everything is in His hands, finding its eventual fulfillment and salvation in Him. Since He is both the Source and the manifestation of all life, what wonder is it that in His great universal production we live and move, manifesting His own Life, His own divinity, in each of our individual souls?

NOTES: 1. Many believe, as does the respected Biologist, Michael Behe, that the propensity for 'life' was pre-programmed into the evolution of matter from the beginning:

“I am not saying the origin of life was simply an extremely improbable accident. I am saying the origin of life was deliberately, purposely arranged, just as the fundamental laws and constants and many other anthropic features of nature were deliberately, purposefully arranged. But in what I'll call the “extended fine-tuning” view, the origin of life is merely an additional planned feature, culminating in intelligent life. The origin of life is simply closer to the very same goal that the other, more distant anthropic features (laws, chemical properties, and so forth) were also put in place to bring about.” (Michael J. Behe, *The Edge of Evolution*, New York, Free Press, 2008; p. 216.).

* * *

20. The Divine Journey (8-23-19)

The divine journey of the soul is a journey to God-awareness that takes place over numerous lifetimes. It is a journey toward the purification of one's heart. God brings His children through their unique life-experiences to the eventual purification of their hearts through love, and the reward of that purification is "the vision of God." As Jesus has said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But understand that when you "see" God, you will not see Him as something or someone else standing before you. The divine inner vision reveals that you and all creatures, as well as all things that exist, are made of God, are part of God, and reside in God. "The vision of God" is an opening of your own consciousness to the realization that you are contained in and consist of the one divine Consciousness that is God. To experience that awakening is your sole goal and purpose in this journey of many lives. In reaching this goal, you shall know the Truth, and that Truth will make you truly free.

Your spiritual journey begins when God awakens your heart to His love. That love is His own and has the power to draw your heart to Him, despite all other temporal attractions. So, give Him the one-pointed devotion of your heart and follow wherever He leads. O my friends, do not pass by such good fortune as this! He is in your heart, for He has fashioned you in His own image. Acknowledge His presence and listen to His guidance, and He will lead you to your perfect joy in Him. As the wave is in the ocean and the ocean is in the wave, so you are in God and God is within you. May He, who is the Lord of the entire ocean of existence, guide your wave to a peaceful shore where you may know God's Light within you, and know your identity with Him.

Long ago, in my sense of separation prior to God's revelation, I had prayed to God, "Let me be one with Thee...", but when He was revealed in me, I did not *become* one with God. No; I became *aware* that I already was and had *always* been one with God, that I live in and consist of the one all-pervading Spirit, that my very substance is God and that my consciousness is God's Consciousness. I realized, as Jesus had realized so long ago, 'I am in God and God is in me. I and the Father are one.'

Then, after being graced by God with the knowledge of my own divinity and the divinity of all creation, I began musing on the life and teachings of Jesus

of Nazareth and his legacy. For, like me, Jesus was the recipient of a powerful ‘mystical experience’ that revealed God’s immanent presence. Today, it is widely recognized that mystical experience is a common phenomenon which has occurred to many, but in Jesus’ time, such a mystical experience was unheard of among the local population and was not at all understood. According to the Gospels, his disciples learned from the lips of Jesus himself of the mystical experience that occurred during his baptism by John, but they had no intellectual context in which to understand that experience, and they chose to interpret it as the long-expected fulfillment of a Judaic prophecy that told of a coming ‘Messiah’. Therefore, after Jesus was slain, those writers of Jewish heritage who were tasked with writing the history of his brief life and career had to rely on their own mistaken assumptions regarding Jesus, regarding who he was, his mystical experience, and his message. It was these well-intentioned, but mistaken, individuals who created the myth of Jesus’ supernatural birth, the report of the voice of God from the heavens proclaiming him to be God’s son, and the apparently miraculous resurrection of Jesus after his entombment. And it is the continued widespread belief in these false assumptions that constitutes the faith of Christianity today. ¹

The true teachings of Jesus are the same as the teaching of all those others who have directly experienced divine revelation through mystical experience. In all such instances, their message contains the saving truth that God is all, that all is God, and that He reveals Himself to whomever He chooses. Clearly, no one has become enlightened simply by reading the words attributed to Jesus, nor will anyone be enlightened simply by reading the words of any number of other enlightened persons. The words of the enlightened can only awaken others to the necessity of forging an intimate relationship with God Himself within their own souls. For it is God alone who is able to confer enlightenment on His children. It is He alone who holds that Power. Therefore, concentrate on Him, pray to Him, sing your love to Him, give your mind, your soul and all your actions to Him, and He will surely confer on you the blissful awareness of your eternal Divinity.

NOTE: 1. For more on the life and mystical experience of Jesus, see my Article, “The Story of Jesus, The Mystic” at www.themysticsvision.com.

21. We Are Made of God (from *Body And Soul*, 2011; revised 9-5-19)

We are made of God and we are never apart from Him. His Consciousness manifests as our own individual consciousness, our soul; and His Energy, sent forth as the 'Big Bang', 'Big Burst', 'Great Radiance', or whatever you wish to call it, constitutes the material universe. That One is the Origin, Source, and *initiator* of the entire field of Consciousness and Energy. All that exists is His. It is His projection, His exuberant radiance. Nothing else exists but that One. Our sense of 'I' too is Him. 'I' am the one and only 'I' that is. My consciousness is His Consciousness. My body, as well as the whole universe, is His manifest form. I and the Father are one.

A personage in a dream is not only permeated with the consciousness of the dreamer, he is *made of* the consciousness of the dreamer. He is essentially *identical* with the consciousness of the dreamer. In just the same way, we are not only permeated by God's Consciousness, we are *made of* His essence; we are projections of His light. And our consciousness is essentially identical with the Consciousness of God.

Our bodies are His light-forms, and we are animated and made conscious by the all-pervading presence of His living Consciousness. When we look within ourselves, we discover that we are Him. For, just as a dream-person looking within to enquire into its ultimate identity would discover that he is in fact the dreamer, so do we, enquiring within, discover that we are the limitless Mind in whom all things and all beings exist.

Jesus said, "I am the Light that is over all things. I am all:
From me all has come forth, and to me all returns. Split a piece
of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me
there." ¹

If you ask a beam of sunlight, "Who are you?" it will answer, "I am the Sun."
If you ask a wave on the sea, "Who are you?" it will answer, "I am the ocean."
If you ask a soul, "Who are you?" it must answer, "I am the One in all. I am
He who alone exists now and forever. I am the light of the one Sun; I am a
wave on the one Sea; I am a living breath of the one Life. I am in all that is
seen or unseen. I am the One in all."

Unfortunately, many believe that what Jesus said is a truth that applies only to that one spiritually unique historical figure; but it is a *universal truth*, a truth for all, and a truth to be realized by everyone: *I am not merely this body, not just this spark of consciousness, nor merely the entire manifested universe; I am the Source of the universe, and the universe itself. I am both the subject and the object. There is nothing else here but I AM. This is what the great Shankaracharya said:*

The fool thinks, 'I am the body'. The intelligent man thinks, 'I am an individual soul united with the body'. But the wise man, in the greatness of his knowledge and spiritual discrimination, sees the Self as [the only] reality, and thinks, 'I am Brahman'.²

I am that Brahman, one without a second, the ground of all existences. I make all things manifest. I give form to all things. I am within all things, yet nothing can taint me. I am eternal, pure, unchangeable, absolute.

I am that Brahman, one without a second. Maya, which appears as multiple forms, is merged in me. I am beyond the grasp of thought, the essence of all things. I am the truth. I am knowledge. I am infinite. I am absolute bliss.

I am beyond action; [I am] the reality which cannot change. I have neither part nor form. I am absolute. I am eternal. Nothing sustains me, I stand alone. I am one without a second.

I am the soul of the universe. I am all things, and above all things. I am one without a second. I am pure consciousness, single and universal. I am joy. I am life everlasting.³

You and I—we are alive in God. Become awake and sense Him—within you, around you, constituting your body and your awareness, the earth, the heavens. This ocean of existence is His. Nothing exists outside of God. To know God is to know one's Self. It is to know the originating Mind of the Father, the One. It is to know the Source of all existence, the Source of all consciousness, and the Source of all bliss. What will you do with this knowledge? Praise Him in your thoughts, and in your words and in your actions. Find your delight in Him—seeing only Him, loving only Him, praising only Him.

NOTES:

1. Saying of Jesus, in *The Gospel of Thomas*, 77.
2. Shankaracharya, *The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*, trans. by Swami Prabhavananda & Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood, Vedanta Press, 1947; p. 58.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

* * *

22. The Secret of Life

(from *Body And Soul*, 2008; rev. 9-4-19)

Biological scientists have celebrated having found “the secret of life” in the information storage and processing factories discovered to reside in the nucleus of every living cell: the tiny strand of genetic material called *deoxyribonucleic acid*—DNA for short. They have discovered that the information that instructs every one of the amazingly complex processes of life is encoded in the DNA molecules located in the nuclei of the cells that make up our bodies. It is the encoded information in this double-helix strand of nucleic material that directs, empowers, and produces the dazzling complexity that is our living body. But the *source* of that intracellular information, the *designer*, the *organizer*, the *programmer* of that information, is hidden from them, and from us.

Clearly, there is some intelligent force bringing about so marvelous a machine as the human body. No one could conceivably imagine that the encoded information in a strand of DNA just randomly arranges itself in such a way without an indwelling intelligence. And if it is conceded that there is some manner of intelligence at work here, what is its source? Science has no answer to this question. But mustn’t it be an invisible yet universally pervasive Intelligence similar to what has been described as “Soul” by nearly all of the philosophers of the ancient world?

I think it is entirely possible that we may never fully understand the details of the transformations which gave rise to life on earth, but of this much we may be certain: Matter alone is insentient; life and consciousness did not simply *emerge* as an epiphenomenon in the process of material evolution without an intelligent and supernatural influence. Where, then, do life and consciousness come from? According to the Judaic scriptures, it was God, who breathed His own Life as Soul into man and presumably into all

creatures. In the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is asserted that we and all creation exist *within* that one eternal Consciousness, which permeates us and all things as Soul, constituting our essential substance as well as our conscious awareness. And the Greek mystic-philosopher, Heraclitus (540-480 B.C.E.) declared that “Nature has no inherent power of intelligence; Intelligence is the Divine.¹ Without It, the fairest universe is but a randomly scattered dust-heap.”²

Clearly, that eternal Mind or Spirit that we call ‘God’ is the source and power of all that is. He has produced all these bodies and their evolutionary developments from His all-powerful light; and He is the inner Soul permeating all matter which we identify within ourselves as ‘I’. Indeed, all is He, and all glory is His. What else might we imagine exists? Who else might we imagine ourselves to be?

All the material universe and all the forces operating within it are evolved from His outspreading light, breathed forth nearly fifteen billion years ago. Yet this immense burst of light-energy would have remained but a teeming chaotic mass, random and lifeless, without His conscious direction, without His indwelling Spirit. His manifestation of a material universe is plainly evident to us; but His guiding Spirit is subtle and hidden from our view. We may infer the existence of that subtle Spirit by observing Its effects in the universe and in ourselves; but It is known directly and with certainty only when He reveals Himself as our inner Self. To some, life appears to be a common, ordinary thing. But, in fact, life is an extraordinarily astounding miracle! It is the Divine Intelligence, the Soul of the universe, who is the *Life* in all life-forms. It is God Himself who is the all-pervading Soul of the universe and the substratum of all that lives and breathes, of all that is sentient and aware, and of all that appears in our world. God is the only Awareness filling the entire universe, enlivening, animating, and constituting the consciousness of all beings. Our life—in fact, all existence, including the material entropy we call death—is contained in and supported by the Life and Consciousness of God.

NOTES:

1. Adapted from fragments of Heraclitus found in Freeman, Kathleen, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1983; pp. 24-34. fragment nbr. 78.

2. *Ibid.*, fragment nbr. 124.

* * *

23. One Consciousness

There is one Consciousness. It is the Consciousness of the One Being. And all the manifested universe exists within that one Consciousness. The various objects of this manifested universe move and operate, not by individual forces or laws of physics, but in and by that One. When He lifts you up and immerses you in that one Consciousness, unites you with it, you will see that: “all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” Who, then, is doing what? In Him we live and move. In Him one Will operates throughout. And we, mere dust motes dancing in His sunbeam, are swallowed and encompassed in His light. Look within and see the Truth.

* * *

24. Individual Souls

(from *Body And Soul*, 2011; rev. 9-4-19)

The unitive mystical vision reveals to an individual that his own ultimate reality is the one great ocean of Consciousness, an all-pervading continuum of Soul, or Spirit. But in our normal everyday awareness, we are cognizant that each of us is an individual soul-entity that is distinct and unique in its development and experience, and, in the manifest world, has an apparent “identity” of its own, regardless of its common identity with other souls in the One ultimate Spirit, or Oversoul. This simultaneous unity and multiplicity was readily acknowledged by the great third century mystic-philosopher, Plotinus; but neither he nor any other has been able to satisfactorily explain the manner in which the one Soul becomes a multitude of individualized souls; how Soul, though one and indivisible, is also, at the same time, divisible and manifold, becoming separate, individualized and individually responsible, souls. Nevertheless, he does offer his own elaborate explanation:

There is one identical Soul, every separate manifestation being that Soul complete.¹ The differentiated souls ...issue from the unity while still constituting, within certain limits, an association. ...They strike out here and there but are held together at the source much as light is a divided thing upon earth, shining in this house and that, while yet remaining uninterruptedly one identical substance.²

... Diversity within the ONE depends not upon spatial separation, but solely upon differentiation; all Being, despite this plurality, is a Unity still. ³ ... The souls are apart without partition; they are no more hedged off by boundaries than are the multiple items of knowledge in one mind. The one Soul so exists as to include all souls. ⁴

The entity described as “both the undivided soul and the soul divided among bodies,” is a Soul which is at once above and below, attached to the Supreme and yet reaching down to this sphere, like a radius from a center. Thus, it is that, entering this [earthly] realm, it possesses still the vision inherent in that superior [indivisible] phase by virtue of which it maintains its integral nature unchanged. Even here [on earth] it is not exclusively the partible soul: it is still the impartible as well...⁵

The nature, at once divisible and indivisible, which we affirm to be soul has not the unity of an extended thing. It does not consist of separate sections; its divisibility lies in its being present at every point of the recipient, but it is indivisible as dwelling entire in the total, and entire in any part. To have penetrated this idea is to know the greatness of the soul and its power, the divinity and wonder of its being, as a nature transcending the realm of "things."

Itself devoid of mass, it is present to all mass. It exists here and yet is [still] There, and this not in distinct phases but with unsundered identity. Thus, it is "parted and not parted," or, better, it has never known partition, never become a parted thing, but remains a self-gathered integral, and is "parted among bodies" merely in the sense that bodies, by virtue of their own sundered existence, cannot receive it unless in some partitive mode. The partition, in other words, is an occurrence in body and not in soul.⁶

That we are individualized souls is clearly evident to all of us who know ourselves as separate, individualized, self-governing, units of self-awareness. We may understand that Soul is nothing less than an extension of the Divine Consciousness, and yet, we must also acknowledge that each individualized soul's perspective is unique due to the differing characteristics and histories

of each individual. Differences in perspective seem to arise and persist through the accumulation of individual experience, inference, and willful intent. And so, we must acknowledge that while the multitude of souls are one in the Divine Consciousness, they are at the same time separate in both their bodily manifestation and their individual responsibility.

NOTES:

1. Plotinus, *Enneads*, V.2.1: *The Origin And Order of Beings*.
2. *Ibid.*, IV.3.3-4: *Problems of The Soul (I)*.
3. *Enneads*, 22:6:4; *Ibid.*, p. 184.
4. *Enneads*, 22:6:4; *Ibid.*, p. 184.
5. Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV.1.1: *On The Essence Of The Soul (I)*
6. *Ibid.*, IV.2.1: *On The Essence Of The Soul (II)*

* * *

25. The Law of Karma

(from *Body And Soul*, 2011; rev. 9-10-19)

We human souls are, undoubtedly, of a two-fold nature: we are essentially identical with the one Divine Consciousness, our Divine Self, which assures us of immortality and a free will; we are only secondarily individualized souls, with our accompanying karmic tendencies, by virtue of our embodiment in time and space. We are a combination, a duality, of identities existing together in the one spectrum of Consciousness: the one Divine Self is our eternal identity, but we are also an individual soul existing in the manifest world. Our essence, the one Divine Consciousness, is the only true ‘I’ in all the universe and beyond; It is everyone’s eternal Identity. But, by God’s mysterious Power of illusion, everyone born into this world takes on a limited set of characteristics as well, constituting the limited temporal identity of each, what we refer to as ‘the individualized soul’. According to that soul’s previous history and its corresponding mental tendencies, the characteristics of each soul are in time made manifest. As the ancient sage Heraclitus remarked, “character is destiny.”

The ‘soul’ is essentially the Divine, but as it appears within the material universe, it manifests both the Divine and the illusory—just as in a dream, we partake of both our true conscious selves and an illusory dream-self. The analogy is exceedingly apt, as in both instances, we retain our fundamental

identity, while operating as an illusory identity in an illusory ‘imaged’ reality. The individual soul is, to a great degree, who we experience ourselves to be in this world; and we operate in this life not only from characteristics acquired in this life, but from the past karmic tendencies we embody as well. However, at a more fundamental level, we are identical with the Divine Self, which comprises, not only our freedom to will and act from a level of consciousness beyond our soul properties and characteristics, but It comprises the very consciousness by which we, as souls, exist.

It appears that there is a good reason that souls are individualized; it is for the allotment of justice, in accordance with “the law of karma.” The law of karma is the divine law of Providence as it pertains to each individual’s actions in this life. It is this ‘law of karma’ that provides an inescapable justice which continually operates throughout every soul’s evolutionary journey. As Saint Paul warned, “Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.”¹ Plotinus, acknowledging this same universal law of justice, known in his time as *adrateia* (named for a Greek goddess associated with the dispensation of rewards and punishments), and today known as “the law of actions, or *karma*”, says:

No one can ever escape the suffering entailed by ill deeds done. The divine law is ineluctable, carrying bound up, as one with it, the fore-ordained execution of its doom. The sufferer, all unaware, is swept onward towards his due, hurried always by the restless driving of his errors, until at last, wearied out by that against which he struggled, he falls into his fit place and, by self-chosen movement, is brought to the lot he never chose. And the law decrees, also, the intensity and the duration of the suffering while it carries with it, too, the lifting of chastisement and the faculty of rising from those places of pain—all by power of the harmony that maintains the universal scheme.²

Thus, a man, once a ruler, will be made a slave because he abused his power and because the fall is to his future good. Those who have misused money will be made poor—and to the good poverty is no hindrance. Those who have unjustly killed, are killed in turn, unjustly as regards the murderer but justly as regards the victim, and those who are to suffer are thrown into the path of those who administer the merited treatment.

It is not an accident that makes a man a slave; no one is prisoner by chance. Every bodily outrage has its due cause. The man once did what he now suffers. A man who murders his mother will become a woman and be murdered by a son. A man who wrongs a woman will become a woman, to be wronged. Hence arises that awesome word, “Adrasteia” [the Inevadable Retribution], for in very truth, this ordinance is an Adrastreia, justice itself and a wonderful wisdom.³

NOTES:

1. *Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, 6:7.* The full passage reads: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”
2. Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV.3.24: Problems Of The Soul (I)
3. *Ibid.*, III.2.1-13: Providence: First Treatise.

* * *

26. The Evolution of The Soul

(from *Body And Soul*, 2011; rev., 9-4-19)

In the scheme of the 3rd century mystic-philosopher, Plotinus, all body-bound souls are extensions of the one Divine Consciousness; but, because each soul is uniquely distinct as an individual, it is able to formulate its own desires and set out to fulfill them in the (lower) material world, thereby incurring the risk of losing sight of its Divinity. And so, from the one Divine Soul, which is their common Source and Reality, a multitude of separate selves comes into existence, each driven by its own independent desires and circumstances, as well as by its false identification with the material body.

These individualized souls, we must not forget, are manifestations of the Divine. Nonetheless, while inhabiting or being associated with bodies, they pass through various experiences which may serve to forge a strong bond with the material world. However, over time, the indwelling Divinity instructs those ‘individualized souls’ by those very experiences in the errors of their ways and returns them by various and sundry ways to the awareness of their

true nature, guiding them by the most blessed path to the reformation of their loving intent and the restoration of their inherent bliss. This is known as ‘the evolution of the soul’.

According to Plotinus, the Divine Mind, in its infinite wisdom, allows more than one ‘incarnation’ for the soul to traverse this evolutionary path. The soul’s excursion into the material realm is fraught with difficulties and dangers and may bring with it many painful and binding impressions. These must be resolved and released in order for the soul to regain its blissful freedom. And so, the process of soul-evolution may be prolonged and stretched over a number of soul-incarnations. Whatever necessity requires will inevitably find a means for its accomplishment in the evolutionary journey toward truth and freedom.

The objective of the soul’s evolution is the purification of the heart and, ultimately, the vision of God. In that vision, it is revealed to the soul that it is truly identical with God, and it thereby becomes free of the illusion of its individuality. Jesus put it well when he said, “You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.” According to this understanding, a man is free insofar as he is cognizant of his essential identity with the Highest, and he is bound when he departs from the knowledge and awareness of his Divinity, identifying with the body/brain complex. He then succumbs to the rule of earthly necessity and is moved willy-nilly by the causative forces inherent in Nature. He has the power, as the Divine Self, to will freely, unencumbered, uncompelled by circumstance; and, for that reason is responsible for his individual actions. All souls are linked by inclusion to the one Soul, and by extension to its Source, the Divine Mind; but only he who is cognizant, aware, of his Divine Identity, is truly free.

* * *

27. A Grand Evolution

How does an invisible and omnipresent Mind
 Create a vast shower of light within itself?
 How does a human mind create a multitude
 Of thoughts within itself?
 Who can answer these questions?
 The divine Mind has this power.

The human mind has this power.
Who can explain it?

The divine manifestation of Light
Miraculously transforms itself into visible forms—
As stars, and planets, with creatures
Crawling on their surfaces.
Who can explain that?
Is it a production of His thought—
A vast panorama of imagination
Taking place within that Mind?
And what role do we serve
In the purpose of this drama?

There is a grand evolution at work here—
Have no doubt!
Have you been thinking
Only of this short-term life?
Did you think you were here just to have sex
And to fill your belly with the meat of corpses,
To accumulate comforts and
Make a name for yourself in this world?
Whether you like it or not, you'll evolve.
You'll grow a little each time that you
Enter into this world,
And you'll throw off many an illusion
Before your journey's done.

But all in good time. This eternal Mind's in no hurry
To bring this drama to a close at once:
The drama's denouement is long and slow.
And the progress of your story depends on you—
On how quickly you learn and heed the clues.
Pay attention now: He's leading you to the knowledge
That He is you and you are Him.
The dreamer and the dream: one unending Self,
One all-containing Mind, your secret identity.

And when you wake to know that Self,
Your journey will be done,

The story will be written, and the end assured.
 But that end is not yet come.
 There's much yet to do and learn;
 Much yet to know and be;
 Much yet to suffer and to earn.
 So, keep up the good work!
 You're doing fine.

* * *

28. The Unitive Vision

The increase in scientific knowledge has proceeded over the years and centuries, so that much of what was once a matter for speculation and myth has given way to a vast body of reliable knowledge currently available to everyone. But the accumulation of such knowledge took a great deal of time, effort, and perseverance on the part of those who ferreted it out from its secret recesses. Think, for example, how long men struggled to know the conditions and order of movement of the stars and the planets of our solar system, and how many false theories preceded our eventual understanding. Today, the vision of man reaches to the furthest limits of the universe.

The current radical evolution of our empirical knowledge entails an equally radical evolution in our comprehension of the invisible elements of the universal order which exist beyond our senses. In this endeavor too, the struggle has been long and arduous, and much still remains to be uncovered, but some advances also have been made. However, such problems cannot be solved, or even investigated solely from the perspective of reason and observation; they require the gleanings from the personal intuition and visionary experience of the countless mystics who have 'seen' into the subtle realms of universal manifestation.

The only evidence for the existence of the Soul is subjective—the subjective personal experience known not only to Plotinus, but to thousands, perhaps millions, who have been referred to as “mystics” or “yogis,” but whom materialists refer to as deluded and “irrational” individuals, whose “mystical” experiences they regard as aberrational hallucinations caused by some neuronal malfunction in the brain.

But it is the consistent nature of this unitive visionary experience, reportedly occurring to numerous souls over a great expanse of time, that provides insight into the nature of our Source and the manifestation of our universe. Without the accumulation of many common experiences of a supersensual reality, we would have no real clue as to our true nature, but only the endless arguments between faith-based partisans and secular rationalists. Merely our powers of observation and imagination alone are simply not adequate to the task. It is visionary experience, obtained by grace through prayer, contemplation or meditation, that reveals to us the true nature of our own conscious self and the universe in which we live.

* * *

29. My Own Experience

(from *Body And Soul*, 2011; rev. 9-8-19)

I am one of those who has been fortunate enough to experience the Divine reality; and so, I will interject here an account of my own experience of the Divine reality in order to provide another first-person account of just what such an experience reveals:

At the age of twenty-seven, I began experiencing the presence of interior sensations and spiritual understandings which led me to actively seek the knowledge of God. I therefore retired to a small cabin in a secluded forest and gave all of my attention to the pursuit of that goal: God's gracious revelation. One evening, I was having my usual nocturnal conversation with my Divine Father; and after a while I found myself in an elevated and finely focused state, experiencing an intense longing for God in the very deepest part of my own soul. I felt then that my only purpose in life was to ascend to union with the Divine, in order to be able to knowledgeably praise and glorify God for the benefit of all His children. And I was willing to die in the process, if necessary.¹

As I prayed for that union, my consciousness was suddenly expanded so that I became aware of myself as all-pervasive, beyond time, and indivisible. In that newly altered awareness, 'I' had become aware of my identity with the one cosmic energy and consciousness that constitutes this entire universe and all beings in it. There was no duality of Spirit and Matter, of soul and body, however. It was clear that 'I' was one undivided Essence that was *both*

consciousness *and* the energy comprising form. My ‘I’ was seen to be the ‘I’ of every conscious being as well as of every inanimate object within this universe. It is an ‘I’ beyond time and place that fills all spatio-temporal beings with life and awareness, even though I might mistakenly attribute that ‘I’ exclusively to this individual body-brain complex.

More than that, as the focus of my concentration continued, I could see at a more elevated, subtler level, the unmanifest source, the transcendent Absolute, as the very font of all origination. I say that I *saw*, but it was not the seeing by a subject of an object, a second; rather, it was a recognition, from that eternal vantagepoint, of my own transcendent nature, my own true Self. What I saw, I saw through identity with it rather than as a seer separate from what was seen.

In this visionary experience I saw no separate soul—neither my own nor any other; but experienced my identity as the universal and all-inclusive Consciousness-Energy that manifests all this universe of forms, including the form I am accustomed to calling “my own”. There was clearly nothing else but the one all-pervading Divinity, with no sense of a separate personal soul-identity. I had not become immobile during this experience but was allowed to write by candlelight my impressions as they occurred. But in reflecting on this experience in the ensuing years, many questions remained. My reason and learning told me that souls exist; yet my visionary (spiritual) experience told me otherwise. For, in that unitive mystical experience, I had not ‘seen’ a soul, or even the suggestion of a soul. I had known only the indivisible unity of all existence.

Now, at last, thanks in part to the reflections of Plotinus, the truth has dawned on me: The soul is not experienced in the unitive vision because the soul is the *experiencer*! It is seeing what is above it—namely its prior, its source: the creative aspect of God, the Divine Mind, which is its own true Self, at a higher level of consciousness. The soul glimpses also that which is prior to the Divine Mind, namely, the Absolute, the One, *through* the Divine Mind. The individualized soul is that in us which is conscious of limited selfhood; and it is that which is silenced and made transparent, negated in the experience of identity with its transcendent source, the Divine Mind.

My own experience of this unitary vision was identical in all respects with that of Plotinus, and I agreed with his conclusions; but I had been puzzled regarding *souls*. There was no *soul* in my (mystical) vision! There was no

soul in that vision because the “soul”, in its vision of its prior, is “taken into unison” with its prior, the Divine Mind, and is made transparent and unaware of itself as something apart. It is the soul that is *seeing*, experiencing its identity with its source, its subtler Self, as a wave’s sense of individuality might disappear as it becomes aware that it is the ocean. Likewise, the soul merged in the Divine Mind doesn’t see any *other* souls, because in the Divine Mind all Soul is one; it is only when it becomes embodied that Soul becomes individualized.

Whether one experiences a world of duality or a world of nonduality is determined by the ‘level’ of one’s consciousness. We live our entire lives in the world of duality, except for those brief timeless moments when we experience union, lifted to that state by the grace of God. So long as the soul is *not* caught up in union with the Divine Mind, the duality of soul and God, and all other dualities, continues.

From the vantage point of the individual soul, God seems to be something other than itself; but when the soul, or ego-self, is merged in union, all duality is annihilated, dissolved in the suddenly perceived Identity of the Divine Mind. The soul is inspired by an attracting love for God; but when the soul is merged in God, there is no longer the duality of lover and Beloved, but only one blissful Self-awareness. When the soul is ‘merged’ in the Divine Mind, it sees from the vantagepoint of the Eternal, and no longer sees from the spatio-temporal vantagepoint. In that sense, the world disappears. But, in fact, the ‘world’ continues to exist; it is just that the soul is seeing it from the inside, as the one Consciousness-Energy.

NOTE:

1. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 9:6:10; MacKenna, Stephen (trans.), *Plotinus: The Enneads*, London, Faber & Faber, 1956; p. 221.

* * *

30. A Gift To Be Shared (9-22-2016; revised 8-21-19)

I think everyone realizes that we all live within a self-limiting illusion in which our perspective on the world is entirely self-centered. Each of us is the center of our own world, the subjective focal point round which everything else turns. My experience is different from your experience; yours is different from mine. And, while we can verbally share our experiences and our perspectives with one another, they remain mere hearsay since they were not personally acquired; and they do not, therefore, affect us in the same way that *personal* experiences do.

Despite this acknowledged incommunicability of personal experiences, I have spent a good portion of my life attempting to convey to others some sense of an experience of my own that I feel has some real importance for everyone, and therefore needs to be communicated.¹ It is an experience that occurred to me nearly fifty years ago, and yet it is a timeless one, in that it was an experience of eternity itself. Strangely enough, I had vowed to God that I would give pronouncement to this experience even before it was given to me: “Let me be one with Thee,” I prayed, “not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory, for the benefit of all Thy children.” I can only explain the uncharacteristic selflessness of this prayer as being itself the work of God’s Grace. And, of course, since God granted my request, you can well understand that I am not only obligated but am resolutely committed to praising God for your benefit, and for the benefit of everyone.

I am well aware that it is as true today as it was in the time of Jesus or in the time of Plotinus that the great majority of the people are ignorant of the existence of such mystical experience. Despite the many learned studies and the many available accounts of mystical experience by well-reputed people throughout the ages, the ignorant majority of the people remain as ignorant as before. Why is this so? It is so because the people comprising the ignorant majority do not have personal knowledge of mystical experience in their own lives and are therefore extremely reluctant to believe that such experiences are possible or relevant to their own lives. I understand this well, as I was once a member of that ignorant majority. And yet, today, I would say to that majority: the very fact that a few souls have experienced divine revelations *does* have a major relevance to your own lives. Mystical experience is a revelation by God of the nature of the reality in which all of

us live. It is as relevant to you as it is to those who are the direct recipients of that experience.

His gracious gift to me of mystical vision was undoubtedly meant for all of us. It was a rare gift of the knowledge that this world is His own, that you are His own, that nothing in the universe is outside of His divine domain; that if we can fully comprehend this truth, we will be able to see His love and His wisdom in all that is created and know His blissful presence in our own lives. For He is the air that fills our lungs; He is the awareness that allows us to experience and to know; He is the kindness that overflows in our hearts. Open your mind to Him, and know the unlimited wonder and joy of being, for your being is *His* being; your being is the expression of His infinite love.

This God-given vision was my own *personal* experience, to be sure, but I ask you to please accept my experience as your own. It is His wish, and therefore it is my wish as well, that you come to know Him in yourself. Look to Him for all that you wish for in this life, and you will be fulfilled beyond your wildest dreams. And, if you are very fortunate, He may also grant to you, as He did to me, the vision of your timeless divinity in Him. So, may it be.

NOTE:

1. If you would like to read a detailed account of my mystical experience, written as it occurred, please click on my article, “My Mystical Experience” in the Menu at my website: www.themysticsvision.com. There, at the “Read or Download Books” page, you can also freely download my book, *History of Mysticism*, containing similar accounts by other mystics throughout history.

* * *

31. All Glory To God

Some men are born to find a mate and raise families of children; I was born to write songs in praise of God. Isn't that strange? I don't know why I was made to be so unusual a person. Even as a child, I knew that I was to be a writer, though I didn't know what I would write. Then, after my twenty-eighth birthday, a prayer to God, which He implanted within me, burst from my heart: "Lord, let me be one with Thee, not that I might glory in Thy love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory for the benefit of all Thy children." The Lord immediately granted my prayer, allowing me to know my oneness with Him, and since that time I have been an instrument of His service. The songs in praise of God come forth, even without bidding. They write themselves, as I watch the pen move. And nothing could please me more than this perfect fulfillment of my birth and my soul's prayer.

Though many would find my life narrow and uninteresting, I'm so grateful that the Lord has blessed me in this way and allowed me to sing His praise for the benefit of all His children—though to me, truly, it seems that I merely leave a space for Him to produce these works through me, and He does the rest. I have seen, in fact, that He is the doer of everything. To Him, therefore, let us give all the glory now and forever.

* * *

32. Tale of The Two In One

God has always been. As an invisible Spirit, He is unborn and unending. But periodically, He manifests from Himself a universe of form in order to live multiple embodied lives within a multiformed universe. And, since He is the only Existence, if there is to be a universe of form, it must be produced from Himself. God periodically takes form by manifesting His own Energy in the form of a concentrated radiation of Light. And, as that Light spreads, it transforms into material wave-particles, which congregate into molecular forms that then become the many diverse structures that go to make up the physical universe. That majestic universe continues to exist for billions and billions of years, and then it returns to the Divine Light-Energy from which it came. Then, in a

time of His own choosing, that Divine Being once again manifests His form-bearing Light as a multiform universe. ¹

But did you ever wonder how God, who is famous as the universal all-pervading Spirit, or Consciousness, also manages to create, or manifest, an immense universe of 'material' forms? It seems incongruous, doesn't it? He is Spirit, yet He produces, organizes, and reorganizes an incredible amount of Mass/Energy. These two qualitative definitions of Divinity seem to be distinctly alien to and incompatible with one another, presenting a perplexing conundrum that has baffled philosophers and theologians for many millennia. The solution to the conundrum that has surfaced in many different cultures throughout history is the recognition that God, though one, possesses *two distinctly different aspects*: He is the eternal Mind that serves as the absolute Ground of Consciousness in which all objects and beings are contained; *and* He is the Creative Power that produces an electromagnetic field of Energy that is capable of transforming itself into material wave-particles, which then aggregate into the elements and forces that go to make up the entire universe of objects and beings.

An eternal Being who possesses two separate and distinct aspects seems a bit fantastic, to be sure; but that is the conclusion reached by nearly everyone who has deeply pondered this question—including those, like myself, who have been graced with mystical vision. In that divine revelation, it is clearly revealed that the one Being constitutes both one's body and one's soul, both one's mind and one's 'physical' substance. There is seen to be only one existent, one contiguous reality identified as 'I', and yet It is *both* Spirit *and* the Energy that becomes Matter; i.e., both soul and body. To give human expression to this duality-in-unity for the purpose of rendering It comprehensible, these two—the invisible Spirit and the form-producing Energy—have been given many different names over the centuries, such as *Purusha* and *Prakrti*, *Brahman* and *Maya*, *Shiva* and *Shakti*, *Jahveh* and *Chokmah*, *Haqq* and *Khalq*, *Theos* and *Logos*, *Godhead* and *Creator*, and many other names.

Here, however, we will continue to call them "Spirit" and "Energy", noting that the Energy is born of the Spirit, belongs to the Spirit, and that, therefore, the Spirit and Its Energy were never divided,

were never two, but are simply two complementary aspects of the one Divine Self we call God. It is also important to note that it is that One, as Energy, who becomes our body, and it is that One, as Spirit, who becomes our soul. It is clearly evident, therefore, that we are, from head to foot, inwardly and outwardly, nothing else but God; that, in accord with His will, God is indeed living an embodied life within a multiformed universe *as us*. Isn't that awesome and marvelous!

* * *

33. The Two Hands of God

There are *two* different ways in which the one Creator-God manifests: (1) As the Mind, Spirit, or Soul that permeates all matter and which constitutes the limited mind, or soul, of each individual sentient being; and (2) As the producer of the light-energy that transforms into the material particles that make up the physical universe. So that, with these two aspects of Himself, He constitutes both matter and Spirit, both body and soul; thereby constituting all that exists. Though some might object philosophically to what appears to be a dualistic perspective, I would point out to those objectors that, since both the substance of the material universe and the indwelling Mind, or Spirit, both derive from one and the same supreme Being, there is, in fact, no duality, but rather an undeniable Nonduality—or, if you prefer, a Unity. That the one God manifests in these two different ways does nothing to detract from His singularity.

There is one other issue I wish to resolve: and that is whether the light-energy that the Creator produces to form the material universe is His own substance or a second substance other than Himself. I maintain that the great burst of light-energy which formed the vast universe is a projection of His own power and is therefore identical with His own essential Being. He did not borrow some other substance to make the physical cosmos; from where would He borrow it? No; He breathed forth that active light-energy from Himself. Though the universe is *not synonymous with* the supreme Consciousness, it is a projection of His inherent power and does not belong to any other category than Himself. It emanates from Him and is therefore of His Being.

Both the light-energy that transforms into the material universe and the indwelling Spirit, or Soul, derive from the same Divinity; and yet they are

not the same. They are different in quality and characteristics and are distinct and obviously separable from one another. Though His Light-Energy is eternally inherent in His Divine Being, the *forms* that evolve from His light-energy are subject to entropy and dissolution. They appear for a brief time; and when those material forms cease to function as viable entities, the indwelling Spirit departs. The forms of His light-energy are therefore transient and subject to decay and dissolution; while His Creative Energy, along with the Spirit, or Soul, continues to exist eternally. It is immortal.

Now, to the question of *how* the Spirit, the Soul, the Divine Consciousness “permeates” the material world: Some ancient philosophers posited a *pneuma* that the Creator breathed into man exclusively, constituting the human soul; others suggested that the Divine Consciousness fills the entire universe as a numinous and all-pervading intelligence. Accumulated evidence—both from empirical and mystical sources—supports the latter premise. An all-pervasive consciousness may be inferred from the “fine-tuning” effects evident throughout the cosmos, though such an all-pervading Intelligence remains undetected by our technological instruments. It is witnessed directly, however, by the human mind, or soul, during what we call “mystical” experience.

During the “mystical” experience, the individual mind (or soul) is drawn into union with God, the Divine Consciousness, and perceives through and as that Divine Consciousness, seeing from the perspective of that Divine Consciousness. While seeing from God’s perspective, the all-pervasiveness of the Divine Mind is experienced and known. In such awareness, that Divine Consciousness is revealed to the soul as both the initiator of the creative act of universal manifestation *as well as* the living Spirit pervading it. Though this knowledge (*gnosis*) is not what we consider to be ‘empirical’ knowledge, it *is* experiential knowledge. It is knowledge obtained from a transcendent perspective and carries a certainty for the experiencer far above any mere temporal knowledge.

* * *

34. The Universe Exists In God

This universe, fostered by His light, exists *within* Him. He is all-encompassing. When the “Great Radiance” of God’s light burst forth as an expanding universe of time and space, of substance and form, where must that ‘Radiance’ have occurred? It had to have occurred in the Mind of God! Where else could you put a universe when there is nothing outside of that Divine Mind, when nothing exists or *can* exist but that all-encompassing Mind?

And so, without the need for an “infusion” of the spark of life and consciousness, this world, by virtue of its presence in the Mind of God, is naturally and effortlessly suffused with His living presence. And what we speak of as the ‘soul’ of individuals is simply the embodied expression of His all-encompassing conscious presence. The inclusion of the universe within the Divine Mind obviates the need for an *infusion* of God’s presence as ‘soul’, since His life and consciousness are inherently the very Ground, substance, and support of the world, and constitute its very being. It is this realization that prompted St. Paul to declare, “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

Some people speak of “intelligent design” in the universe, as though God were similar to a human craftsman or architect who had thought out and prepared a blueprint prior to building the universe. But a little reflection on the nature of God reveals that He is neither a maker of blueprints nor a builder. What He *is* is an unfathomable Intelligence, the all-pervading Mind in which the universe exists, and by whose power it operates. God does not stand apart from the universe, like a builder fashioning a building; He does not “fine-tune” the universe as an object separate from Himself; rather, the universe exists within the Mind of God, and every single speck of it is controlled and coordinated by His will.

Though we have given names to all the various forces comprising our universe, such as ‘electromagnetic fields’, the ‘force of gravity’, the ‘strong’ force, and the ‘weak’ force; all these are simply manifestations of the cohesion inherent in His Mind-born creation. We have also named the material particles mysteriously formed from His light, such as ‘quarks’, ‘protons’, and ‘electrons’; but these also are simply the evidence of the scintillating effusion of His imagination. Only in these last centuries have scientific investigators come to understand just how inconceivably evanescent and indescribable these sub-microscopic particles really are.

As dream-stuff responds to our human will, the stuff of this universe, produced from Himself, responds to His will. And, since He transcends the confines of space and time, those evolutionary changes that, from our human perspective, require eons for their accomplishment, He accomplishes in an instant. Because His Consciousness is all-pervading, all things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. What appears to our eyes to be random and uncaused is, in fact, the unfoldment of His Will.

Consider: If an invisible and omnipotent Mind caused the decay of one particle of uranium and left a second particle intact, would it not appear to those witnessing it that what had occurred was the random spontaneous decay of a particle? And if that same invisible and omnipotent Mind caused a gene in a strand of DNA to mutate, would it not appear to those examining that DNA that what had occurred was the random mutation of a gene? How would one be able to distinguish such a caused event from a random one? All is occurring within that one Consciousness. He has only to breathe, and a million worlds begin and end; and in this breathing, all that is contained within this universe is nourished and sustained.

This body that you regard as your own is actually His—as pebbles are the earth's, as waves are the ocean's. In accord with His purpose, the sun daily stirs the waters of your heart, and the vapor of your love flies to the four corners of the world; while at night the moon stills you, and the cold darkness is your bed. All is in accordance with His design. He is the life-pulse of every creature; and when the clanging bells of joy exult within you, it is His joy; the fire of song that inspires you is also His. Even the obscuring dust of unknowing that blinds us to His presence is brought by Him. He is in the clouds and in the gritty soil; and if you bend over a pool of clear water, you may see on the water's surface the reflection of His face.

How does He pervade every particle of this universe? He is the Mind from which the universe took birth, and the universe exists within Him. All is contained in Him. In Him, there is no I or Thou, no now or then. In Him, life and death are undifferentiated. And that transcendent deathless Self is our eternal identity. So, you see, there is nothing to vanquish, nothing to lament, and nothing on which to pride oneself. In Him, and by Him, all is accomplished in an instant.

* * *

35. All Things Move Together of One Accord

*All things move together of one accord;
Assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.¹*

Sometimes we forget that all that exists in this world is created and controlled by God. All things do indeed move together in accord with His divine Will, and His assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain. This is an unmistakable truth experienced by the mystic, but I understand that for all others, it is not at all evident, and must remain merely a matter of faith. It is so easy to be misled and to forget the infallibility of the Divine Will, because oftentimes the affairs of the world appear to our limited vision to be in error, or random, and ungoverned by His just and perfect Will. But time will prove all things right. His evolutionary plan and His vision will be vindicated in the end. Therefore, hold this faith above all: that everything is connected to His purpose, and all is ordered and occurs according to His will. Praise God!

NOTE:

1. from “Song of The Self” by Swami Abhayananda, in *The Supreme Self*, South Fallsburg, N.Y., Atma Books, 1984.

* * *

36. Time And Eternity (2008; last revised 8-15-19)

From a purely theoretical point of view, Eternity can be a very daunting concept, one which scientists usually refrain from considering. But for those of us who have been privileged to *experience* Eternity directly, it is neither a theory nor a concept. We know, with absolute certainty, that Eternity is the underlying foundation, support, and projecting power upon which this universe of time and space exists. We know that time exists only in the universal manifestation, with a recurrent beginning and end, and that in Eternity there is no such thing as time – no past, no present, no future, no projected universe at all. For Eternity is just another name for the absolute Consciousness that is the Ground and support of the universal projection; and it is the source of the (limited) consciousness which sentient beings

experience within themselves. Eternity is the upper reach of Existence, to which the mind may be drawn, if God so wills; and there, it is seen that time has no absolute existence but exists only as a byproduct of the universal expansion of space projected upon the one eternal Mind. It is a measure, as spatial location is, of the progression of universal manifestation.

This universal manifestation is superimposed upon Eternity, as a dream is superimposed upon the consciousness of a dreamer. One could say that the temporal universe and Eternity exist in separate dimensions – as the dreamer and his dream-world exist in separate dimensions, levels, or realms of consciousness. Eternity is the highest level of Consciousness; It is experienced by a mind that is intensely and utterly focused and intent upon the Divine. It completely supplants one's limited consciousness, raising one's awareness to Its own place, and revealing one's ultimate identity with Itself. This experience of Eternity is very pleasant. It is single; perfect aloneness, blissfully content. It sends forth a new universe in every breath, while in the same alternating breath annihilating the old. It is so simple and unencumbered that it cannot be conveyed in speech. It is the ancient, unnamed God. It occupies its own place, its own dimension, quite sovereign and alone. The temporal array spewed out in each breath offers no distraction or interruption to the sweetness of Its homogeneous peace. It is its own perpetual delight and satisfaction.

The cosmos, quite a different thing, originates from Him, and dissolves in Him; and time derives from Him, though He is utterly beyond time's reach. It is as a dream, emanating from the mind of a dreamer, exists in its own place, depicting a drama, originating, then reaching a culmination, but in no way affecting the dreamer; even though each of the dream characters is, in reality, the dreamer, and once awakened, returns to the awareness of its true source and Self.

This projected universe of time and extension is nothing more than a dream. We who live within it are all none other than the one Eternal Mind, and on awaking shall once again know our blissfully eternal Self. And even now, in this temporal moment, in this spatial unfoldment of the cosmic dream superimposed upon the eternal Consciousness, we are in truth that one eternal Self, blissfully content, fully awake, in our solitary, timeless and space-less place on high. And while this imaged time marches on, begun in that first instant of cosmic appearance along with space, we momentary creatures move to its rhythms without knowing why or whence, yet happily

knowing, by the Creator's grace, our everlasting Self beyond time, and singing praise and glory to His name.

* * *

37. Within His Own Mind **(last revised 8-13-19)**

At the highest octave of His Consciousness,
The One remains whole, unmoved, inactive and unmanifest;
It is only His lower Mind that acts,
That manifests a vast universe of forms within Himself.

Within His own Mind, He creates a universe of Light;
And, by virtue of its presence within His knowing Mind,
Every particle of that universe is filled with His Consciousness

.

And so, in harmony with His omnipresent Will,
All things move together of one accord;
And assent is given throughout the universe
To even the motion of a falling grain.

Because He is the living presence within His Mind-born universe,
He easily manifests within His creatures
As animate life and awareness,
And, little by little, He leads His creatures
To self-reflection and wisdom.
And then, when His creatures are fully prepared,
He reveals Himself within them as their origin and indwelling self,
Their very life and awareness;
And He brings them to completion in the knowledge
That they are none else but Him,
That He alone comprises all that is.

One by one, He leads His creatures
To this self-revealing wonder and amazement, their ultimate prize;
And when His solitary game of hide-and-seek is complete,
He takes a rest,

And then He begins it all once again. What fun!

* * *

38. The Purpose of God's Creation (8-13-2017; revised 8-15-19)

The summit of divine evolution comes when God, living and experiencing *as* a human soul in a human body, awakens to the truth that all this is Himself, that He is and has always been the one all-pervading Existence. God gets to experience the joy of this revelation not once, but billions of times in countless different forms over an immense span of time and space. That, I believe, is the hidden purpose of His universal manifestation: to slowly evolve as human souls over lifetimes in utter blindness of ignorance, and then, in a time of His own choosing, to suddenly awaken each of these beings from within themselves to the greatness and beauty and joyfulness of His own limitless and unfathomable being. The thrill of enlightenment multiplied billions of times, the sudden unveiling of His perfection in billions of souls that turn out to be Himself—this is His evolutionary game. This is the answer to the question, 'Why does He do it? What is the purpose of His Creation? I believe it is for this long prepared and frequently experienced Joy! It is an awesomely involved adventure, a prolonged drama, played out on countless far-flung stages, in countless unsuspecting hearts, each one culminating in Joy—the ever-new and unimaginable Joy of the discovery of one's own unbounded Self. What an exquisitely marvelous and satisfying game He has devised—satisfying both to Him and to us, who are His images and instruments! Praise God!

* * *

39. Imagine

Imagine there's one religion, and one God who lives within everyone. Imagine that, through contemplative experience, every human being is capable of directly knowing that God who is their divine origin and eternal Self. Imagine that, in this contemplative experience, the world of time and space is transcended along with one's personal identity and is replaced in consciousness by a universal Identity that is eternal and all-pervasive. Imagine also that, in the past, some who experienced that eternal Identity,

became convinced that they themselves were the Divinity incarnate—and they really were! And then imagine that everyone else is as well—even if they don't know it! Imagine that this experience of an eternal, all-inclusive Self is possible simply because we are all made of the divine Light and our consciousness is actually synonymous with the one eternal Being. Imagine that nothing other than that one Being exists, that we are all contained within It, and are capable of knowing It in ourselves!

Imagine that this mystical experience of the one divine Self is a common factor in the lives of the founders of all the religious traditions, and that all of the religious traditions in the long history of human experience were simply independent manifestations of that one common mystical experience. Imagine that ancient Judaism, for example, founded on the mystical experience of such ancient figures as Abraham and Moses, represents an anthropomorphic theological view appropriate for the time and place of its origin, given the undeveloped psychological perception of that culture in the millennia preceding our Current Era. And imagine that Hinduism and Buddhism, which began around the same time as Judaism, but in the very different geographical setting of the subcontinent of Asia, were both also clearly based on that same contemplative mystical experience.

Imagine that Christianity and Islam, both later developments, represented the thought of individual founders who were inspired by their own spiritual experience, and whose small following then evolved over time into world-wide religious traditions. Imagine that, in the process, a few inevitable fictions were added and became integral parts of all these various religious narratives over the course of time, disguising the fact that they are all products of the mystical experience revealing the one divine Self. Imagine there's one religion, and one God who lives within everyone. Imagine that, through inner reflection and contemplation, every human being is capable of directly knowing within themselves that one God who is their divine origin and eternal Self.

* * *

40. The Maker of The Game (8-3-2015)

How is it even possible to talk about God when we have so little real knowledge about Him? We are aware that He transcends the universe as pure Spirit, or Mind, or Consciousness, and yet we are also aware that He constitutes the universe itself. He is both our inner conscious Self and the form and substance of everything that we experience. At times we are aware that He is within us, for we are able to come in contact with Him only through our conscious minds; but, upon reflection, it seems more reasonable to assume that the entire phenomenal universe, including ourselves, is contained in Him; and that our intimate conscious contact with Him is therefore a result of our integral presence *within* Him.

In our philosophy, we hold that the material universe is His creation, made of Himself in some way, perhaps as an emanated substance such as light transformed into matter. We have ascertained only recently that the latest burst of that emanated divine Light occurred around fourteen billion years ago as 'the Big Bang' or 'Great Radiance'; and we know that ever since then the material universe has been expanding. Our mystical perceptions as well as scientific reasoning leads us to believe that, eventually, this expansion will turn to contraction, and the whole thing will collapse in upon itself, only to begin once again in a similar deliberate outrushing of light turned into mass and energy.

We humans relate familiarly with the phenomenal/material world, but the world of Spirit, or the universal Mind, is much more unfamiliar and remote. The nature of the relationship between our own individual soul/mind and the transcendent Mind that is God is not at all clear. We feel that there *is* such an intimate relationship, and mystical experience suggests that each of us is integrally connected with that transcendent Mind, and, at some level, synonymous with It; but how all this is possible is not even remotely understood. To make matters more difficult, the *awareness* of His immanent presence is, for many of us, notoriously inconstant and tenuous at best.

We must believe that one day our understanding of His nature will become substantially greater, and we shall become more consciously aware of His immanent presence. At present, we must acknowledge our utter lack of true spiritual knowledge, and our nearly complete reliance on faith and the occasional 'mystical' glimpses to guide us. Either our present state is simply

a prolonged evolutionary stage of ignorance which will eventually pass in time, or it is exactly the way He intends it always to be. Presently, we do not know with certainty what is the objective of our participation in this adventure—or even whether or not there *is* a definite objective.

It may well be that our collective ignorance regarding God's purposes is a necessary requirement to assure the trust and faith on which our individual judgment and responsibility must rely. To be absolutely certain of His will and overly confident of His presence and Grace might in fact diminish our individual merit and detract from the adventure of life as He intends it. But, of course, speculating on God's purposes or motives is a very uncertain and unverifiable business. His intentions are what they are, and, despite the presence of hints occasionally granted, and the occasional glimpses of our divine Identity, we are each clearly responsible for our own judgment in this three-dimensional adventure called “life”, and responsible also for the quality of our own individual relationship to the Master and Maker of the game. I feel certain, however, that, over the course of time's evolution, each of us shall eventually reach the finish line and attain lasting certainty of our eternal Identity in Him. Therefore, to all a heartfelt God bless and Godspeed!

* * *

41. God's Love

Love is born of God and may rest in nothing less than God.
 For we see that all *worldly* love is but one half of an inseparable pair,
 And we recall with gladness that God's love has no contrary;
 For He is the One in whom all opposites merge,
 The One whose love never wanes.

Search this earth and through all the galaxies, you'll find
 Nothing truly worthy of love but God. For all else is lovable
 Only to the degree that it is reflective of Him.

Let not your love, therefore, settle on anything or anyone but Him.
 For He alone is the source of life and joy,
 The Giver of wisdom and satisfaction,
 The final destination of all the heart's desires,
 And the source and resting place of every wandering soul.

* * *

42. What Kind of Love Is This?

When we experience the kind of attraction to another person that we humans call “love”, we form at the same time its opposite in the form of “hatred” or “aversion”. This is because of the very nature of the human affections: for love and hate are but two sides of the same coin. Just as “north” cannot exist without “south”, just as “up” cannot exist without “down,” just as the amplitude of a wave cannot exist without its trough, neither can “attraction” or “love” exist without its opposite, “hate” or “aversion.” This is the nature of the wave-like affections that humans produce. However, there is a kind of love that is *not* subject to this polar alteration: it is the love that emanates from the divine Self in us. That love does not consist of two polar opposites; it is singular and constant, because it is all-inclusive. Not only does it have no opposite, it is impersonal and unconditional. In other words, that love does not focus on any distinct person, but rather on the divine essence of all persons, the divine and indivisible reality of which those individuals are the manifestation. Such divine love does not result from an attachment to an individual, but is all-embracing and all-inclusive, and therefore has no opposite.

We humans experience both kinds of love—one kind more than the other, depending on our individual proclivities. The polar love, born often of a merely physical or sensual attraction to a particular individual, is common in our youth. When we are young, we fall in love quite readily, and through the frequent experience of such personal infatuations, we learn how easily this kind of love fades, and how easily it reverts to its polar opposite. Eventually, as we age and the desire for such unfulfilling relationships wanes, we become more and more aware of the divine love that lives in our hearts, and which flows outward to all beings equally and unconditionally. This love is of the nature of God and raises a soul upward to its Creator. It is a liberating love that requires nothing of its object but gives itself without

demanding anything in return. It is the wholly satisfying gift of God that flows unceasingly from within us and sheds light on all whom it touches. It is this divine love that all of us are designed to experience and know within ourselves, as we evolve from the human to the divine.

* * *

43. Why We Were Born

The Jews are praising Thee, Lord;
 The Christians and Muslims are busy praising Thee as well.
 The Hindus and the Sikhs, the Platonists and the Taoists
 also sing Thy praise.
 The farmers tilling the land have no other goal but to give
 praise to Thee;

Even the men and women of science, who hope to ferret out
 Thy secrets,
 Are engaged unwittingly in praising Thee.
 For no one on this earth of Thine can find satisfaction
 In anything other than Thy praise.
 What other purpose might we have, O Lord?
 Why else were we born? Why else would we live
 But to joy in giving praise and glory to Thee?

* * *

44. How May I Praise Thee, Lord?

Though my soul yearns to flood the world with Thy praise, when I open my mouth to speak, there are no words to say. My heart leaps up to sing, but the sound is stillborn in bewildered silence. My arms lift up thousands of bouquets of multi-hued flowers to lay at Thy feet but fall helpless at the realization that these flowers already belong to Thee, are indeed Thy glory and Thy gift.

How then may I praise Thee, Lord, who art the singer, the praise, and the instigator of the desire to praise? What words are worthy to speak of Thee?

What gift is not Thine own? What song is not Thy sound? O God, who dost fill my heart with the desire to praise Thee, let Thy song of love cascade from this heart, which is also Thine own, and enchant the world with its joyful melody. Let all hearts be awakened to see Thy spreading Light. Let knowledge of Thee spring up like a clear spring of water to quench the thirst of every mind and satisfy every soul with certainty and peace.

O God Thou dost praise Thy own self in the countless hearts of countless creatures fountained forth from Thy own effulgent will. If it be Thy will, let this life which Thou has imagined into being become an instrument of Thy praise, whether in song or in silence. Let Thy Love, Thy Grace, Thy boundless Joy release itself and flow through this projected form of Thine to flood the world with Thy own Light and Thy own Song to lift all souls to Thee.

* * *

45. Praise God

I'm here to sing the praise of God, and so I shall.
And let none think belief's the basis of my song,
Or words I've read in high-flown works;
The subject of my song is what I've seen,
What He's revealed to my most meager sight
In holy quiet night's retreat.

Though many have praised His creation —
Its beauties, and its grandeur;
I would praise Him in His unborn formless Essence
Where He lives unmoved, and happily serene.

Though He breathes forth the immense and tumultuous cosmos,
Enjoying the drama of its unfolding activity,
He remains clearly indivisible
And perfectly unmoved within Himself,
Continually aware that He alone exists.
There is no other; so all's contained in Him.

Serene, yet keenly awake, He spreads

His outflowing radiance in every direction;
 Delight, unbounded and uninterrupted,
 Permeates Him and all that He proffers.
 In one breath, He flashes forth the universal array,
 And then withdraws it all again,
 Only to breathe once more and fling the stars
 And galaxies wheeling on their rounds again.

For creatures, it's an almost endless parade
 Of eon upon eon, unfathomably deep in time's recess;
 But for him, who knows no change or movement,
 It's but a moment's breath.

And yet the greatest wonder is that every soul breathed forth
 Is but a time-wrought image of Himself;
 And each one, being His by virtue of its life in Him,
 Is capable of finding at its core that One who fashioned it to life.

As a figure in a dream awakes to know he is the dreamer,
 Each soul, when it awakes, discovers it is none but Him.
 He appears as though in a house of many mirrors,
 Fragmented into a million images, yet all are Him;
 It's but a masquerade.

And when the soul awakes to know its deathless Self,
 Beyond imagined dreams of personhood,
 It knows that forever it has lived serene and blissful,
 Just beyond the dream.

It learns that all the devilish battles and tortuous travails
 Were but a thought-parade in which, for the briefest time
 It marched, all unawares, to finally break away
 And find its way to freedom from time's tumultuous play.

To find such freedom one must look within,
 And, gaining clarity of mind, discover who one really is.
 Who one really *is* is Him! For none exists but Him alone.
 It's true! He lives alone in high eternity;
 But He lives as well as you and me.

It's you and me who lives in that eternal sky
 While playing out our destined roles below.
 Two selves, one vigilant while tossing out the stars,
 The other strutting on this stage of dreams,
 Oblivious to the other, her subtler Self and Source.

The all-encompassing, all-sustaining Self of all
 Is quite alone, and quite contained
 Without a drama to behold,
 Until He beams Himself in outward radiance
 As particles and galaxies and separate living things
 In bright array,
 To people all these worlds with beings
 Conscious of their knowing selves.
 His game: to lead them all within themselves
 In stage by stage to knowledge of the ways of things,
 And, finally, to awareness of that deeper Self
 Who flung them forth to journey home
 To know the ultimate Truth that they are Him.

Awaking to that joyful knowledge,
 The spell of separation falls away
 Along with fear and worry, woes and cares.
 And, lifted up in mind and spirit,
 The knower lives in peace and joy beyond this world
 Alone, eternal, as all in all.
 He knows the universal design to be his own;
 He walks in freedom. His soul is blest.
 Praise God!

* * *

46. A Song of Praise

O God let me sing a song to Thee.
 I am just Thy foolish unworthy child, as Thou dost know;
 But I beg Thee, let me honor Thee with my song of praise.
 After all, I have no other reason for existing but to sing Thy praise.

O God Thou art so far beyond my vision that I do not know how to begin to praise Thee.
 Thou art hidden beyond this world of my daily experience,
 invisible to my eye.
 But Thou hast shown Thyself to me when I was young.
 I know Thy perfect aloneness, untouched by all that transpires here below;
 I know Thy timeless face, Thy incomparable peace.
 Dear Lord, I can only stammer and write these miserably inadequate words;
 for no words are there to speak of Thee.
 All that flows from Thee bespeaks Thy bounty; but Thou art far greater than the sparkling sky, the star-filled cosmos.
 Thou art the emptiness from which all bounty flows;
 An emptiness that contains nothing yet gives being to everything.

As winds arise from air, as waves arise from the sea, as dreams arise from the quieted mind, so does the universe arise from Thee.

Thou art the bearer of happiness, the stirrer of devotion,
 the inventor of thought, surprise, and awe.
 Thou art the redeemer of error, the mother of love;
 Thou art the beauty of a summer's day.
 O God, whatever *is* is done by Thee.

But why should I remind Thee of Thy works?
 It's Thee, above all works, that I adore.
 I, who am Thy errant child, whose soul is birthed by Thee, and who longs to return to Thy womb, am nothing else but Thine.

Displayed into this world, I am Thy own substance, Thy own imagined form. And as I'm from Thee, so to Thee shall I return.
 No longer image shall I be, but transformed into Thee,
 not something other, but Thee entire;

One glowing I, unending, perfect beauty, perfect bliss, and consciousness absolute.

None of these words, of course, come close to saying what Thou art; though I searched, I could not find words that tell Thee truly.
Down here, we have no words to describe what Thou art;
and so, once more, my praise falls short.
But we both know Thy true condition; we both know Thy unspeakable place of being; and we both know it is of that I speak.

Dear Father of my life, my thought, my love, please accept my pitiful attempt to praise Thee.
Fault me not for my lack of words that tell Thee.
Only grant that I may always love Thee, till I'm once again at home with Thee.

O dear God of Gods hear my prayer! You know my heart, my heart's desire:
I long to rise above this worldly self to bathe in Thy untroubled Life.
I cannot do it, but only Thou canst bring me there to live in Thee.

O Lord, who art alone, sole Source
And Master of the world, I beg Thee draw my mind and heart to Thee; let no other love distract me.
Let no dreams or other goals detain me from my journey home to Thee.

* * *

47. Song of Thanksgiving

Hari, my love, I wish to sing to Thee a song of Thanksgiving.
Yet, O how I dread the futile search for meaningful words to offer Thee!
My heart is full of thanks and praise for each breath that is granted me,
But to speak reveals the lie of pretended two-ness that I must tell.
For Thou art my breath, my voice, the Real; and I am but the image;
I live by Thy uncommon Life, imaged in Thy dream of me.
And yet my gratitude to Thee upwells, as an image in a mirror
Might admire its own source, its real and original Face;
Or as a dream character might call out praise to its dreaming Self.

Though we are one, not two, I'll speak as though we're separate and apart;
 For how else might I truly speak to Thee?
 O Hari, Thou art alone, undiminished by the clatter and glitter
 Of a billion billion images, mere reflections in a house of mirrors;
 For Thou art alike the house, the mirrors, and the flitting images as well.
 This speaking too is like the barking of a dog in an empty field;
 For, though it may be heard, the silence of the cosmos remains unbroken.
 Yet I, this imagined form, am present—at least in appearance;
 And because I'm here, please let me speak to Thee in loving thanks.

O Hari look how wonderful is this story Thou dost tell!
 Look how beautiful is this body and the life ensouled.
 Though all too quickly it will turn to dust, this form is Thine
 And holds Thy greatness and Thy holy light and breath of life.
 Thou, this brightly glowing wakeful knowing;
 Thou, this deep and endlessly creative song of light and love
 That bubbles up from Thy unfathomable depths
 Within the soul of me to greet each day with joyful thanks.

O Hari, from Thy eternal Goodness and unknowable Repose,
 Thou hast issued forth this universe of man and beast
 With purpose known only to Thy own delight;
 And Thou hast given Thy own thoughts to guide us from within
 To bring us happily, through adventures great and small,
 To our end in Thy boundlessly blissful Self.
 O Hari, it is a most wonderful and admirable drama
 Thou hast produced, full of harrowing dilemmas,
 Frightful predicaments, and uproarious denouements!

Yet, in the end, we all awake to know one Self,
 The Dreamer of this dream, our ever-undisturbed Reality.
 Always unperturbed, Thou art forever untouched by time,
 As the patient sky is ever untouched by passing clouds;
 We are where we have always been in truth, never separated
 From our constantly unfolding, ever undivided Self;
 Where all the fervent lives o'erpassed, like dreams,
 Once left behind in waking, hastily retreat from view,
 Revealed as the flimsiest of transient illusions.

In waking, we are one in Thee, O Hari!
 And in Thee, *as* Thee, we have always been.
 Never imprisoned as we thought in separate forms,
 Once reawakened from our dreams, we know our
 Ever undivided and eternal Identity as Thee.
 In blissful folds of snow-white radiant Eternity
 We rest as Thee in peaceful oneness and joy;
 But while I live in pretended separation from Thyself,
 Let me now offer my song of grateful thanks to Thee,
 Who art the Life that lives me, my secret pride and joy;
 For it is Thou who hast made Thyself as me.

Dear Father, all that Thou hast made is good,
 And all Thy beauteous forms sing praise and thanks to Thee.
 Then, let me uplift my voice in song as well
 To glorify in praise my gracious Lord:
 O Hari, all praise be to Thee in Thy heavenly glory!
 All praise be to Thee in Thy universal pageantry of form!
 My head is bowed in loving thanks and worship,
 Knowing Thou art all and more than all.
 Thy grace to me is beyond what my voice can tell;
 I can but offer thanks, with hands held high, to Thee,
 My ever kind and gracious Lord.

* * *

48. My Two I's

My present name is Swami Abhayananda, though I was given the name Stanley Ross Trout at birth. Both of these names refer to who I am as an individualized person temporarily existing in the grand illusion of time and space. But there is another 'I' that I claim as my *permanent* identity. That other *I* (what Vedantins call the *Atman* or Self) is the universal Consciousness that is the eternal foundation and support of all I's. If I refer to my temporal phenomenal self, 'I' means one thing; if I refer to my eternal Self, 'I' means something else. So, as long as *I* exist in both the eternal and the temporal realm, it appears that there are two I's. But that is only an appearance.¹

It is only those who have become consciously aware of the eternal *I* who are able to recognize this apparent double-identity, and to distinguish between the two *I*'s. Jesus, for example, on whom the religious organization of Christianity was founded, spoke frequently from the individualized temporal identity, identifying with the personal being who was born as a Jew, and lived in the community of Nazareth; but he had known his eternal '*I*', and he occasionally spoke from that universal Consciousness identity as well, such as when he said, "I am the Light; I am above all that is manifest. Everything came forth from me, and everything returns to me. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift a stone, and you will find me there." ²

Many of those who do not recognize the existence of two *I*'s in themselves are confused by the words uttered by Jesus. 'Well, which is he?' they ask, 'man or God?' And, of course, the answer is 'He is both!' They are the two aspects of his dual identity. The same is true of you—except that you are as yet unaware of your greater identity. When you do become aware of that greater Self, you will declare, as Jesus did, "Before Abraham was, *I* am." ³

The dual identity of Jesus as man and God was much discussed by the early Church Fathers, but they did not understand that Jesus was disclosing, not just his own personal reality, but the divine nature of all men. Though he was treated as a common preacher, Jesus was a mystic, privy to the mysteries of the divine reality, and he was revealing a metaphysical truth universally applicable to everyone.

The fact is, there are never really *two* *I*'s; every soul is a manifestation of the one universal Consciousness and has no other permanent identity. That One is the only true '*I*'. But, from the time we are born into this world, we begin fashioning a false separate personal self that exists only in our minds. At birth, each of us is given a name to distinguish each of us as a unique being, with a distinct parentage. We each bear distinctive characteristics, and, in the course of time, distinctive histories, which in turn contribute to our distinctive personalities. In this way, a soul is developed over many lifetimes, giving us a strong sense of individuality and uniqueness. But the fact is that we are all manifestations of the one eternal Self, the one Consciousness, from whom and in whom all beings exist, and to whom we all owe our being.

That one Being is everyone's true Self, but in order to become aware of that universal Self, it is necessary to give some time to meditation in which you can quiet the mental urging and clamoring of your fabricated personal identity. It will help if you can focus your mind instead on a phrase or mantra that brings silence and peace to your conscious awareness. Let the breath too be calmed, and devoutly invoke the Lord of all being. When you become aware of His presence, approach Him reverently. If your heart is pure and He is favorable to you, He will merge your awareness into His own; all remnants of your limited personal being will fade away, and you will know yourself as the one illimitable Self of all.

NOTES:

1. See my article, "The Appearance of Duality," and the article, "The Story of Jesus, The Mystic", at my website: www.themysticsvision.com.
2. *Thomas, Gospel of*, 114; (trans. by Thomas O. Lambdin), from Robinson, James M., ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, E.J. Brill and Harper & Row, 1977, p. 135.
3. *John, Gospel of*, 8:58; from the New Testament of the King James Bible.

* * *

49. A Sense of Me

We know that we are grounded in and supported by God; we know
 That He is the eternal Reality underlying our very existence,
 And yet, in our minds we seem to be something other:
 We sense the existence of a 'me'
 Who walks this earth in multitudes with its own peculiar will.
 And even though we know that God is our own higher Self,
 Not separate from us,
 Each 'me' is filled with an innate love for Him,
 As though He were something other than our own Self.
 We long to be enfolded in His embrace, to unite our awareness
 With His far greater awareness, but we can't do it without His grace.
 And so, day and night we lament that He so seldom reveals Himself,
 Though He knows full well that our only delight
 And desire is to know Him,
 To see the light of His eternal day and merge into His all-revealing light.

But be assured: He will not always remain hidden!
 One not too distant day or night He will still your breath,
 And your mind will become absorbed in Him alone;
 And whatever this thing called 'me' is will disappear in one
 Unending conscious light, and you will know in fullest clarity
 That, all along, it was only Him, the one never-ending Light,
 Who walked this earth pretending to be a 'me.'

* * *

50. Let Me Be Thy Instrument

Teach me, Lord, to look with love upon Thee and all Thy doings; for Thy love is my only delight and my only good. Teach me, Lord, to correct my wayward mind whenever it falls from remembrance of Thy goodness and the presence of Thy omnipotent hand in all that occurs here on earth. Lift me into Thy Light, O Lord, for without Thy grace, I am but a burden on the earth. Teach me to become perfect in wisdom, perfect in knowledge, perfect in contentment, perfect in love.

Let me by Thy instrument, Lord, in spreading Thy perfect joy to Thy children in whatever measure is ordained by Thee. Father, remove from me all darkness of ignorance, and all self-serving motivations, that I may truly serve as an instrument of Thy truth and Thy grace on earth; and I shall give adoration to Thee in my heart, and sing Thy praise throughout all the days of my life.

* * *

51. The Me Between Us

When I first discovered that God was within me, and that everything in the world around me was also God, it still seemed to me that, between the God within and the God without, there was still a ‘me’ that stood in the way of my vision of unity. I felt as though I was a pitcher of water in an ocean of water: I understood that there was water within and water without, but *me*, the pitcher, was there as a separate thing preventing my awareness of God. And I prayed that God would take away this *me* that veiled His omnipresence and let me know oneness in Him.

And suddenly I was graced by God with the revelation that even this body, and even this *I*, is God’s own. It had been my owning of this *I* that prevented my realization that there is nothing anywhere but God. He creates the forms of this world, and He constitutes our awareness of this world. It is we who make the mistake of thinking that this body and this awareness of *me* separates us from God.

This perception of a *me* is a blindness within us that tends us toward self-preference; we call it the *ego*, or ‘I’. It is a blindness that is built in for self-protection, for self-preservation. But it prevents us from the vision of God’s all-encompassing presence, and it can only be healed with the help of God’s grace. He reveals through divine vision that the One constitutes both *I* and God, both past and future, both life and death; and that all things move together of one accord, coordinated in God. It is this vision that rids us of the blindness under which we so long suffered.

But beware! We may not easily be rid of this *me*, for this blindness—this ego—will continue to rise up in its attempt to corrupt your sight once again. At every corner, it awaits the opportunity to subtly reassert itself and leave you once again in darkness and confusion. Your only weapons against this enemy are silence and humility, and a constant diligence to remember the One in whom and by whom you are fashioned. Sing His name in your heart to remind you and rely on His help in your need. He will illumine your blindness, and restore you to sight, and eventually He will uplift you to wholeness in the sweetness of His eternal Light. There, no ego will threaten; there, you’ll need not struggle to remember. His peace and yours will be the same, all duality put behind.

52. The Presence of God

It is not intellect or learning that endears us to God, but the tender receptivity of our souls. The realization that we are nothing without His blessing is the sole passage into His presence; the poverty and pure longing of our heart is the only invitation He heeds.

The only knowledge He requires is the knowledge that He alone is the nectarean sweetness our heart desires; that He alone is the fulfillment of our soul's hunger and its thirst; that He alone is the source and aim of our every prayer, and that without His gracious presence there can be no happy day or hour.

How can it be that He is present every minute,
And yet to the devout lover's heart He is so painfully absent?
Alas, He is not present, nor can we taste His sweetness or see His beauty,
Unless we are truly present to Him.

* * *

53. Where Are You Now?

He did not come into the world; there was no world.
He didn't come into the space; there was no space.
He invented space and the world with a great "woosh!"
And then a roaring fountain of light that spread out
Like porridge spilt by an invisible Chef on high.
Where are you now? Do you know? Look about!

He invented time to spread out the cooking of his masterpiece.
He invented space to accommodate time.
And the fountain of His light danced into lively forms
To worship Him with love.
Do you court Him in the light? Do you fly to Him at dusk?
Do you see the scattering particles of His love forming your world?
Where are you now? Do you know? Look about!

* * *

54. No One Ever Enlightened Himself

No one ever enlightened himself,
 Though many have taken credit for the feat.
 He gave you that brief glimpse, didn't He?
 You did nothing to bring it about;
 It was all His doing, all His grace.
 And now you hold classes to teach others
 How to become enlightened. What a scam!
 In His time, unscheduled by you,
 He lit up your mind, parting the ego-veil.
 You saw—as far as He allowed you to see,
 Revealing that all is His own, all is in Him.
 He allowed you to see with His eyes,
 So you could say: “All this is me!”
 But then the old ‘you’ came back, and now
 You try in vain to lift your vision
 To that holy inside view.
 Reform your heart, my friend!
 There's no other way, no other key, to that door.

* * *

55. What May I Give Thee, Lord?

What may I give Thee, O my Lord, who hast given to me so greatly of
 Thyself? What, indeed, do I have to give that is not already Thine? And
 who is this upstart ‘I’ who speaks of serving ‘Thee’, whom everyone knows
 art both the server and the served?

It is this very sense of ‘I’, this false ego that I offer, Father, as my gift to
 Thee. For there is nothing that is not Thine own: this body, mind and
 intellect, all belong to Thee and serve Thy purposes in reflecting Thy
 Wisdom and Thy Truth. It is only this mistaken sense of ‘I’, this ‘me and
 mine’, that stands like an interlocutor before Thee, obscuring the clarity of
 Thy inherent Light and the sweetness of Thy perfect Peace.

Then let this ‘I’ be always prostrate at Thy feet in adoration, silenced in
 surrender, awed and voiceless in anticipation of Thy touch. And let these

eyes turn ever-upward unto Thee, though blinded by Thy brilliant Light, until, transparent as a polished pane of glass, this soul becomes the pure conduit of Thy Truth, Thy Will, Thy Love, who art the only 'I' that truly lives.

* * *

56. Be Still And Know I Am God

Years ago, I came across a quote attributed to Meister Eckhart, and though I don't know where among his copious writings this quote appears, or even if it is an authentic quote from the great Christian mystic, it is a sentiment that holds an important place in my own philosophy and is one that I frequently reflect upon and hold as a treasured rule. It is this: "*The very best and utmost attainment in this life is to remain still and let God act and speak in thee.*" I believe implicitly in the truth of this quote, and I try to practice it in my own conduct every single day. Many is the time it has proven its value in the course of my life.

Implicit in this saying is the notion that there is more than one identity within each person's consciousness: one is an individual personal identity who is simply the active voice of our uncensored mind; and the other is a still, underlying identity who speaks and acts from a divine perspective—an identity whose voice, though subtle, can be ultimately trusted as that of God within us, our true Self. Our highest duty is to deliberately keep our active and uncensored mind quiet and at rest, and to allow God, our divine inner Self, to handle whatever needs to be said or done. This, of course, is not an easy accomplishment. It requires, first of all, a self-directed mindfulness that holds in check the impulse to speak or act on one's own without benefit of divine inspiration. We need also an unfailing trust that divine inspiration will come, if only we refrain from taking matters into our own hands when divine inspiration appears to be absent.

The "still, small voice" of that divine Self exists in everyone. It is heard and discerned only when we have resisted and put to rest our own scattered mental impulses, so that His voice alone may be heard. God wants to work in and through all of us, but He can do so only when we ourselves are silent and obedient to His will and His abiding wisdom. And when it comes time to withdraw into ourselves in order to meditate or pray, we find these same two identities that constitute our active inner life, and our task remains the

same: Silence that clamoring mental self by focusing on your true identity, your divine Self. The one making all the noise pretends to be you; but you are really the silent one, the one who knows without words the truth of who you really are. Abide in that everlasting Self.

* * *

57. Trust In God

God is not only the Creator and Governor of His universe, He is the Foundation of existence, being both the conscious Ground as well as the substance of the entire universe, and so He comprises both our mind and our body, and all else that exists. All is contained in Him and partakes of Him; nothing has existence other than in Him. This being so, why do we ask ‘How is it possible for us to connect to God? How may we experience His presence?’ This question is like that of a wave on the ocean asking how it may connect to the ocean; or how it might experience the Ocean’s presence. As a wave is contained in the ocean, we are contained in God, and therefore we need only become awakened to know His presence both within and without. What more is there to be said?

Be still and know the One who is, the One who lives as you. Trust in Him. Every moment, He is watching over us all. Though turmoil and anxiety fill many hearts, and fear and distrust is rampant in the world of men, trust in His inscrutable will; He will unfailingly bring us to the wellspring of His love and the refuge of His eternal peace.

* * *

58. Let All Voices Be Silenced

Let all voices be silenced, and do Thou only, Lord, speak to me in my soul. Let all the clamor of thoughts, stirred up in my restless mind, be stilled; and let my anxious heart find rest in surrender at Thy feet.

Do with me, Lord, as it pleases Thee to do, and let no care for my own well-being arise to trouble my heart; for Thy wisdom and Thy love shall always suffice to guide me day by day.

Dear God, bestower of Grace, lift up my mind to Thee—above all worldly thoughts and concerns, above all reservations and doubts, and let my heart pour forth loving praise in showers of golden song to Thee. Thy Will hast always led me in times past through all my troubles, and why should I turn now to my own devices?

Let Thy joy fill my heart and my soul, and lift me, Lord, on wings of longing, buoyed by the breeze of Thy Grace, into Thy perfect stillness, into Thy fatherly embrace.

* * *

59. Let Me Sit Quietly In Thy Presence.

O my Lord, Father of the universe! Let me put aside all thoughts and concerns, all activities of the body or mind, and let me sit silently in Thy presence. Let my mind be stilled in adoration and let all voices within me be stilled. Thy language of intimacy is silence, for my soul most nearly approaches Thy state when it is silent. O Father conform my mind to Thy peace. Still me in Thy calming glance. Rest me in Thy cradling wings. Dissolve me in Thyself.

How wonderful, Lord, is Thy stillness! In quietude, I know fulfillment. In nothingness, I know release. How good Thou art, O God of gods, to rest me in Thy peace, to grant me from within this taste of Thee, of Thy bliss. What a great wonder it is that I can find Thee and touch Thee and enjoy Thee when I am empty and still! How happy this, Thy silent, laughing Self!

* * *

60. My Love Affair

I have enjoyed a life-long love affair with God. Though He is always within me and I am always within Him, I pretend to be separate from Him in order to carry on this relationship. One day soon I shall shed this separateness and shall once again live everywhere as all-pervading Spirit; but, for now, I'm confined to operating exclusively in conjunction with this tired aging body and brain. I know that it is He who gives me life and thought and movement, and without Him no I exists. And so, when at last He leaves this body, it is I who shall leave it as well; it is I who shall shed these bodily limitations, and the happy culmination of our love affair will result in the dissolution of our pretended relationship. Then, I and Thou shall melt into one inclusive awareness and no longer exist as two separate identities.

'Thou' art my beloved, my father, my master, my larger self. Within me, Thou art the voice of both the seeker and the sought. Yet neither I nor Thou is ultimately real; only the one awareness into which these two imaginations must eventually dissolve is ultimately real. And yet, dear Father, how mysterious is this grand illusion in which an imaginary I seeks an imaginary Thou! How amazing is this love affair with all its yearning and desire that takes place wholly within one undivided awareness! Do you create this imaginary division within yourself only to enjoy the exciting drama of a loving relationship? Or does your only satisfaction come from bringing this imaginary I and Thou together at last in joyful union?

Help me to know Thy purposes, dear Father, and whatever is Thy will, may it bring Thee all possible joy and satisfaction. Let my will be the same as Thine, for Thy will alone is truly unfailing. I am grateful, dear Father, for all Thy many gifts and blessings throughout these many years, and I pray that all my errors and failures may eventually be corrected, and that I will at last be made whole and perfect in Thee. Till this earthly illusion of separation is fully cast away and I know once again our inseparable unity, I remain Thy child, Thy lover, Thy servant.

* * *

61. My Foundation

There is an ‘I’ at a deep level in this apparent ‘me’ that surfaces in its own time and produces creations that are beyond the power of this apparent ‘me’ to produce. That ‘I’ is divine and eternal and graces ‘me’ with Its presence in moments of its own choosing and has the ability to reveal a reality more true and more clear than this apparent ‘me’ can even imagine. It is this deeper ‘I’ that is referred to by some as the inner soul or *atman*, the Divine, or the Christ within. That ‘I’ cannot be known unless He makes Himself known, but His influence may be recognized by His fruits.

Therefore, let it be known and understood by all who read the words I have posted here that whatever truth or clarity may be found herein is not of my own making, but is given by that divine Self as a favor to this supplicant soul for its eagerness to serve. No praise is due this eager soul, this apparent ‘me’, but all praise is due to that divine and eternal ‘I’ who has treated me so generously in allowing ‘me’ to be included among Its humble servants.

That one Self, eternal and undivided, does not truly consist of two beings: a Master and servant, an ‘I’ and a ‘me’; rather It is an indivisible Spirit—appearing as an individualized form in this manifest world as ‘me’, but operating *within* ‘me’—as eternal Soul, a universal ‘I’. At times I address that Spirit as “Thou”, but He is my ground, my foundation, not separate, but surrounding and encompassing ‘me’. We are one, though, while the body persists, along with this *ego*, it seems that we are two.

* * *

62. Self-Reliance

For spiritual aspirants, there is a great deal to be said for living in a focused spiritual environment such as a monastery, ashram, or temple; but oftentimes a life so lived is at the cost of one’s intellectual and moral freedom, and this is detrimental. To limit oneself to a specific tradition, with determined hierarchies and specific unquestionable narratives, is always detrimental to the freedom of thought. And if that tradition demands an unswerving devotion, not to the divinity within you, but to the words and divine authority of some book or historical person, so much more is the limitation and the detriment.

Of course, living unprotected in the world is dangerous also. There are many temptations to avoid, and the peace required for meditation and contemplation is hard to find. Also, the absence of the companionship of like-minded souls makes for a lonely existence. But, it seems to me, that despite the loneliness and the hardship, an earnest soul has the strength, courage and inner resources to forge a spiritual life in the world. She finds companionship in the presence of God and knows the added advantage of living free of confining restrictions to her intellectual and moral freedom.

I am a great believer in freedom, and therefore recommend to all spiritual aspirants the path of independence, non-affiliation, and self-rule, which allows freedom to evolve. Even if conforming to the herd appeals to your desire for belonging to a community or for the possible attainment of some measure of authority; resist it; be your own master—even if it means you must deal with some loneliness and struggle. The greatest attainment is freedom—the freedom to give your heart entirely to God within you, and to think and act in accord with the dictates of your own divine Self. At the end of a long and productive life, nothing will savor so sweetly to you as the satisfaction of being and having been wholly true to your Self.

* * *

63. The Way of God

It is a great marvel to me that, despite the fact that we are all the embodiments of the Divine, of God Himself, the most predominant trait of all human beings is that they so hatefully despise each other, and constantly criticize and seek to harm one another. Equally astounding is the fact that each person thinks that everyone but themselves is suffering from this disease, and that they themselves are immune to it. But this is your malady and mine! This is your sickness and mine. We can blame it on the ego that afflicts us—but no one can defeat that ego but ourselves; no one but you, and you, and you, and me.

We are the embodiment of God's unflagging and undivided love! Why then don't we enforce our minds to think and act accordingly? Unfortunately, we have seen too many examples of evil, of tyranny, or inhuman cruelty in this world that, but for the critical perspective of a few, would have gone unbridled and unchecked. We have learned, therefore, to look with a critical eye at the activities of others, but we do so at the expense of our broader

vision of a divine world. We are all seeking to know the truth, and we are all—even the holiest among us—capable of making mistakes, capable of blindness and error. And each of us is worthy of tolerance and forgiveness. This is the way of God, who contains and embraces all His children—those lost or otherwise. And it is an example we do well to follow.

* * *

64. How The Enlightened Man Lives

How does the enlightened man live? He lives free of concern for himself, for he lives only to serve. As he views all the world as his own self, he acts always for the good of all. He is relaxed, asking for nothing; he relies on the universal order, trusting entirely in the perfect benevolence of the One. He is friendly to everyone, knowing all are struggling in the face of death. He gives, unconcerned with receiving, for the One he serves fills his heart with joy, and that is all the reward he needs.

He is wise, but he appears to be a fool. He appears to be poor, but he is the wealthiest of men. He lives and acts in the world like everyone else, finding enjoyment in pleasures, like everyone else. But, to him, it is all a game, quickly put aside. He does not follow the broad pathways of men, but he keeps to his own quiet ways. His is a life of peace, hidden and calm, though he accomplishes a thousand marvelous deeds. He seeks no glory or honor, and so is ignored by the world. He is a roaring fire, shedding light for generations, warming hearts both living and unborn; yet, in his own heart, he never strays from the sweet tranquility of his eternal home.

* * *

65. If I Told You

Many of us have experienced the interior revelation of the divine nature of ourselves and of all reality. We have announced throughout the centuries that this experience is real and profoundly meaningful. But these announcements have meant little or nothing to those of you who have not experienced this revelation. If I told you that you are the one source and

divine Self of this universe and all beings in it, what knowledge would you have gained? You would have gained nothing, and you would be no wiser than before. Words cannot reveal the truth to you; Self-knowledge is not made of words. You will know the truth when it is revealed within you, when the Self reveals Itself, and not before. All my words can do is encourage you to look, to search, to examine who you are at your subtlest core. If the truth is to be found, it will be found in quietude at the highest reaches of your heart and soul. When you have received the blessing of God, then you will know the truth of who you are. Then alone will you know the truth of who you are.

* * *

66. The Nondual Truth In A Nutshell (last revised 8-14-19)

When I was a young man, I was graced with a mystical experience, a divine vision,¹ that revealed to me that I was not truly the unique individual person I thought myself to be, but was in fact a manifestation of an all-pervasive continuum of Consciousness, that I was made of that Consciousness, and was nothing else but that Consciousness. And yet, how could this be explained? Over the years that followed, I endeavored to formulate in words a metaphysical context that would provide a rational explanation for that mystical experience, an explanation which would also conform to current empirical data. Here, in a nutshell, is what I have determined to be the metaphysical context of that experience:

First of all, the one conscious Continuum, the reality that I experienced in that mystical revelation, is the one indivisible, formless and all-pervasive Consciousness-Bliss who alone exists, and whom we usually refer to as ‘God.’ That Consciousness-Bliss possesses a Power of Creation, by which He is able to fashion an entire universe of imaginary forms within Himself. With that Power, He periodically breathes forth an intensely powerful current of high-frequency Light which, as it expands, converts itself into mass-bearing ‘particles.’ And those particles combine to become atoms and molecules, which in turn combine to compose the various objects of the manifested universe.²

That Power of Creation—the Light-Energy that constitutes all the universal forms—is inherent in the one Consciousness-Bliss, and so it is also eternal;

but the forms of the various objects composed of that Light-Energy are transient and temporary, subject to change, entropy and decay. Thus, all the imaginary forms of this created universe are constantly changing and evolving, while the Light-Energy of which they are formed—the Power of Creation— exists eternally in the one Consciousness-Bliss.

The most recent burst of divine Light, called by some “the Big Bang,” occurred fourteen billion years prior to our present time; and over the immense expanse of time that has passed since then, the expanding converted ‘particles’ of Light, having transformed into ‘material’ particles, have congregated to form the many stars and planets spread throughout the universe. On at least one of those planets, the one Consciousness-Bliss manifests His own conscious Life in various creatures, and those living creatures evolve into many different forms and species, including humans. Like their eternal Source, these evolved living creatures also possess the power of creation, having the power to create an imaginary subjective world within themselves that they may then manifest in the objective world.

All of this dynamic multiplicity takes place in the universal Creation that results from the expansion of the Creative Power of the all-pervasive Consciousness-Bliss. Before the divine Creation, there is only the one Consciousness-Bliss; and after the Creation expands and evolves from the divine Light with the passage of time, there is still only the one Consciousness-Bliss, as all the universal forms created in His imagination are contained in Him. And because the universe is within Him, all the universal forms are alive with His own Consciousness.

This is *why*, when a living creature on one of the planets in this universe enquires within as to its true and lasting identity, even though that creature may have acquired individual characteristics and the belief that it possesses an individual identity of its own, it discovers, by the gracious revelation of the One, that it is in fact comprised solely of the Creative Energy and that it is created and animated by the one Consciousness-Bliss. Just as a wave on the ocean might realize that it is not separate from the ocean, but is, in fact, nothing but ocean, that living creature realizes that its separate identity is illusory, and that it is, truly, nothing else but the one eternal Consciousness-Bliss whose imagination all this is.

When this divine truth is revealed in you, you will know that only One exists, and that *you are* that One who alone exists and who will continue to

exist even when all these individuals and all these worlds have vanished and are no more. This is the nondual truth that has been revealed to me and to all those others throughout time who have been graced with divine vision.

NOTE:

1. The account of that Divine vision may be found in the Article, “My Mystical Experience” at www.themysticsvision.com.
2. For a more complete explanation of the manifestation of the universe from the Divine Light, see my Article, “How God Made The World.”

* * *

67. We Who Have Been Blessed (last revised 7-14-19)

If we reason clearly and correctly, we must come to the acknowledgment of our utter dependence on God’s blessings. We have no power, no intelligence, no sweetness, and no illumination of our own; all that we know as ours is in fact the gracious gift of God. For that reason, we cannot claim to have earned spiritual wisdom or vision by some worthiness of our own making. Whatever comes to us does so of His power and His grace. And so, though I would gladly offer instruction and advice in the endeavor to assist others in joining their soul to God, I am too clearly cognizant of the fact that He alone can bring each soul to His embrace; and that He alone, whose Light illumines all, can peel away the blinders of the illusory ego, and show Himself as the true and everlasting Self of all.

So, what am I to say to those who ask the way to God? ‘Follow the noblest that’s in you; that will lead you home to Him. Revere silence, solitude, reflection, and deep thought. Read the lives and words of those who found their way to His door, and thus purify your heart. Above all, converse with Him; He’ll guide you from within and lead you every inch of the way. Rejoice often in His great love in looking after you and all good souls. He is the inner life, the inner heart, of you; and He seeks only what is your highest joy and light. Turn your face to Him, your mind to Him, your heart to Him; and nothing else at all needs to be done. When it is your time to know your eternal identity, the whole universe, including the stars in the heavens, will conspire to bring about your awakening. Do not fear; no one will be forgotten or left behind.’

* * *

68. Wake Up! (12-26-19)

We all recognize that we each have a purpose peculiar to our own self-development that is designed and decreed by God. But we must recognize also that we have a *common* underlying long-term spiritual purpose in knowing and giving expression to the Divine within us, to the one eternal Self whose manifestations we are. To know that Divine Self, we must seek God within ourselves; and if we are fortunate, we will experience a mystical dawning within our souls that will reveal to us our own divinity, our own eternal Self.

Such mystical experience is the bedrock source of all religion: It is the source of the Upanishads; it is the source of Buddhism; it is the source of the teachings of Abraham and Moses; it is the source of the teachings of Jesus; and it is the source of the teachings of Muhammed in the Quran. Why is it then that there is so little public acknowledgement of the existence of mystical experience and its importance in the lives of the great representatives of human spirituality? Mystical experience has occurred throughout our history to a few extraordinary individuals, who having told of their divine revelations, have deeply affected the course of human religious tradition and the history of human development; and yet our popular societal culture is quite oblivious to the occurrence of mystical experience.

The “news media” may be relied upon to feature daily the latest rap star or movie queen, but when was the last time you heard or saw in the News any mention of mystical experience and its profound implications for an increase in understanding of our true nature and the true nature of our world? Is it possible that we are just in a cultural slump these days? No. It is *not* just the commentators of today; it has always been thus. Reporters of the secular culture have always been deaf and blind to accounts of anything beyond their sensory experience. It is only the mystics themselves who speak of mystical experience; the subject remains utterly closed to the ignorant majority of people in our popular societal culture. Frustrating as it is, the layered inequality of spiritual understanding among people seems to be an *intended* feature of the Creator’s universal scheme of things, and therefore the mystic’s vision will continue to remain an inconceivable mystery to all but those blessed few who are privileged to experience it. Only the recipients of mystical experience, those who are known as “mystics,” are

able to speak authoritatively about mystical experience, its source, and its content. To all others, it is an unfathomable mystery whose existence is subject to belief or disbelief in accordance with each individual's personal inclination.

On the positive side, however, the academic community is very much engaged recently in discussing 'mystical experience'. We have seen a recent rash of learned academic articles regarding the validity or non-validity of mystical experience by academic professors whose only familiarity with such experience is from what they have read in books. But, however beneficial this may be to the general awareness of mystical experience in our society, I would like to point out to these earnest scholars that one of the distinguishing hallmarks of mystical experience is that such an experience, being a divine revelation, occurs beyond the level of normal human consciousness, and is therefore quite beyond any kind of normal psychological evaluation or explication. For that reason, if an admittedly ineffable mystical experience is to be spoken of, it may be done effectively only by one who has actually experienced it. It is only fitting that what we learn of mystical experience we learn from those who claim to have experienced it. Those who are tempted to offer their learned opinion on mystical vision, without any direct experience of it, must be kindly advised to remain silent.

In one's normal, everyday state of consciousness, it is possible to conceive some ideas about the nature of God and His creation, but it is not possible to actually *see* the spiritual nature of things; for that, you must enter into the divine consciousness. You must be drawn by the grace of God into an altered state of rapturous awareness, in which the divine glory is made visible and where all is clearly realized to abide in the kingdom of God. I would not call it a trance, but it is definitely other than one's ordinary state of consciousness; it is more concentrated, more focused, more awake, and only in that extraordinary realm of awareness will you be able to see your true nature as divine, as all-pervading. Unfortunately, however, there are no roads leading to this clarified state of consciousness and no directions for how to find it; it is a place to which only God can take you.

When I was a young man, Almighty God, who fills the universe and commands the elements, who is the Lord and Ruler of all that is, placed in my heart a prayer; and then He fulfilled that prayer by making me one with Himself, filling me with divine knowledge and grace. Is this not a moment to

celebrate as one of the very greatest moments in all of human history? To me, of course it is. And, when the Lord casts His gaze upon you and enlightens *your* heart with His divine favor, the greatest moment in human history will occur for *you*. Until then, continue to seek Him with all your heart and soul.

No one really knows what “enlightenment” is until it happens to them. But be assured that it is not just a myth; enlightenment is real. In some cultures, it is described as “union with God,” “the Divine Marriage”, “Self-Realization”, or any number of other names. But it is the ultimate Goal and Purpose of all man’s endeavors on this earth and always has been. Today, however, in these dark times, we are bombarded with the message that our happiness depends upon owning a “smart phone”, that the highest goal and purpose of every young person is to become an athlete, a professional player of basketball or football, to earn a huge salary and achieve fame and renown. This is the “dumbing down” of our civilization; this is the repudiation of our culture, the surrender to the ideals of idiots, to the government of imbeciles. And *if* I thought that anyone was listening, I would shout, “Wake up, my brothers and sisters! Wake up! Remember who you are and reclaim your Divinity!”

Those who *have* directly experienced a profound realization of the Divine are often found to be associated with one specific religious tradition of another. There have been Self-realized, or enlightened, saints among the Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs alike. It seems nearly impossible to find a true mystic who is not affiliated with one or another religious tradition—a fact no doubt attributable to the strongly-felt influence of sectarian religion in the education of children in nearly every regional populace.

As for myself, I have no such affiliation. I have been deeply influenced by the devotion of the Christian, Thomas á Kempis, by the nondualist philosophy of the Upanishads and Shankaracharya, by the poetry of Sufis such as Rumi, and by the Neoplatonist vision of Plotinus; but I do not consider myself to be a member or affiliate of any of these traditions. In fact, I am of the opinion that we would all be much better served if we could just boil them all together in a large pot and skim off all the long-accrued, habitual and separative elements, such as the personification of God as Jesus in the Christian tradition; the mythology of legendary patriarchs and the

divinely appointed nationalism of the Jewish tradition; the sectarian allegiance to the ancient relatives of 'the Prophet' in the Islamic tradition; the fanciful gods of the Hindu tradition; and other such sectarian nonsense. Once we skimmed off all these impurities, we would be left with a purer brew from which all could happily drink.

What would be left would be a simple and straightforward love of God, a love directed solely to Him, both in His transcendence and in His immanence. It would be a devotion requiring no formal or ritualized activities, one which relied on no ancient revered texts, but one which pointed all souls toward direct personal contact with the Beloved and an allegiance to Him in every thought, word, and deed. Such a 'pure' religion would be universal, uniting all mankind in a common creed in which hatred and murderous violence would be disallowed under any circumstance. Jesus, the Buddha, Muhammed and Abraham would be honored as distinguished members of a holy brotherhood, and God would be re-established as the sole rightful object of our worship. Every variety of worship and praise of God would be encouraged with no limit to their expression. The real meaning of the word, 'religion', which signifies the uniting of the soul with God, would be supremely honored in the hearts and minds of all. Of course, this ideal is not possible of attainment today, but it is the goal, and one day it shall be realized.

When this goal is achieved, the widespread recognition that mystical experience is the fountainhead of all religion will constitute one of the most significant historical revolutions of our time. It will be comparable to the Copernican revolution that so overwhelmingly transformed the intellectual comprehension of our place in the cosmos. Likewise, the Mystical Revolution, will utterly transform our understanding of who we are spiritually and redefine our spiritual path. It is a revolution that has already begun silently amongst the most thoughtful and knowledgeable of us and which in time will expand to illumine the minds of every man, woman and child. It will be a revolution founded in divine revelation and yet which is free of religious superstition, a revolution based upon the common spiritual experience of the most gifted illuminati among us.

69. Now, While There's Still Time
(last revised 7-14-19)

Now, while there's still time, call on God with a yearning heart!
 How swiftly passes this busy life of occupations and obligations.
 Too soon the day is lost to inconsequential chores;
 Too soon the months, the years, are lost
 To scattered aims and fruitless schemes.
 Suddenly we awake one morning, and we're old and feeble,
 Unable to make any effort at all.
 And who knows when the end will come?
 You may be certain it will come one day —
 Perhaps without warning, unannounced,
 Perhaps while you walk, or sleep, or play;
 Or in between the syllables of a word you start to say.
 And when it comes, will your heart leap up and cry,
 "O glorious day!"?
 Or will you beg for just a little time to set things right—
 The way you'd always hoped they'd be?
 O friend make now your heart to be as you would have it then.
 O now, my friend, while there's still time,
 Call on God with a yearning heart!
 Lead your soul to Him who is your true and everlasting home.
 He is your joy unlimited, your boundless satisfaction;
 Your Lord, your Goal, your Life, your Self.

* * *

END

